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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 2 June 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

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(a) Annual report of the Executive Director for 1992 and programme-level activities (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (continued)

(a) ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR 1992 AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES (continued) (DP/1993/29 (Parts I, II and III), DP/1993/30, 31, 32 and Corr.1, DP/1993/33 and 34 and Corr.1)

1. Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan) said that the world's population was growing at a rate that threatened to negate efforts to ensure a decent quality of life for humankind. Most of that increase was taking place in the developing world in countries that were least able to cope with the resulting strain on resources and the environment. There was growing agreement that it was essential to stabilize the global population within the shortest possible period and to make that objective and related development issues central considerations in the formulation of public policy. Population issues should be taken into account at all levels of decision-making and in all sectors of development policy. For their part, development programmes should be formulated from a long-term perspective, with due attention paid to developmental sustainability and to emerging demographic issues.

2. With regard to the specific activities of UNFPA, his delegation was disturbed to learn that contributions for 1993 were likely to be the same as for 1992, owing in part to a decrease in contributions from some traditional donors. He therefore welcomed the strong commitment made to UNFPA by the United States, whose decision to once again take part in the activities of UNFPA boded well for the success of the Cairo Conference, which was a particularly important effort being made to address the problems of population and development. Japan hoped that the United States would play an important role in revitalizing the Fund with respect to both financing and policy-making.

3. Japan also welcomed the new donor countries, each of whose contribution, regardless of its size, increased the sense of solidarity in combating the global problems in question. In that connection, it was important to list all donors in the report on the review of the annual financial situation, rather than referring to them only as "remaining donors". For its part, the Japanese Parliament had approved a contribution to UNFPA for fiscal year 1993 of $63 million, including an amount earmarked for the International Planned Parent Federation.

4. Unfortunately, given the substantial increase in the demand for population programmes, the available resources were inadequate. It was therefore more important than ever for UNFPA to strive for greater financial discipline by improving programme management, increasing transparency in the distribution of resources to programmes, and by making more efficient use of financial and human resources. Such an approach would in turn lead to improved conditions for increasing financial contributions.

5. Japan welcomed the independent institutional evaluation of UNFPA and looked forward to learning the details of the report. It also welcomed the efforts of the secretariat to reduce the budget for the administrative and programme support services for the 1994-1995 biennium below the current level, although further efforts were still necessary.

(Mr. Maruyama, Japan)

6. With regard to the country programme projects, his delegation noted with approval that a larger portion of resources was being allocated to priority countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa and in Asia and the Pacific, and that the work plan for 1994-1997 would do even more for those countries.

7. The mandate of UNFPA emphasized information, education and communication (IEC) activities as critical to efforts to address population issues. In that connection, the strengthening of media relations was very important and Japan fully supported the idea of holding international media seminars prior to regional population conferences as a means of increasing awareness of population problems and drawing the public's attention to the Cairo Conference.

8. Lastly, coordination and collaboration with other United Nations agencies and with bilateral and non-governmental organizations was of great importance. Since population issues were inextricably linked with such other problems as those relating to women, development, the environment and migration, there could be no solution of the former without a solution to the latter. Increased coordination and collaboration with United Nations agencies and bilateral and non-governmental organizations should therefore be actively pursued.

9. Mr. HODGE (Observer for Australia) said that UNFPA should continue its efforts to promote respect for basic human rights in the implementation of population programmes, whether such programmes were funded by UNFPA or by national authorities.

10. Australia had long since recognized the close link between population, development and the environment and was aware of the implications of rapid population growth for the social and economic welfare of millions of people in the developing world. Regrettably, an overemphasis in the past on numbers rather than on people had led in some contexts to narrow and authoritarian approaches. When used in framing and implementing population policies, such approaches had led to cases of human rights abuse and subsequently to widely publicized criticism of family planning programmes.

11. The position of his Government on that issue was very clear. It supported population programmes based on a firm commitment to the basic right of individuals to decide freely, and responsibly, the number and spacing of their children. It was also committed to promoting informed choice and better education and health services for the millions of people, particularly women, who currently did not enjoy those basic rights. Australia absolutely rejected the use of coercion in family planning and its funding for such activities, including its support for UNFPA, required compliance with that policy. In that connection, his Government welcomed the decision to send a fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of demographic statistics recently released by the Government of China.

12. He had taken the floor to recognize the work done by the Executive Director and her staff in a very sensitive and difficult situation.

13. Mr. ZIARAN (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Council's current session played an important role by identifying problems and making appropriate recommendations.

(Mr. Ziaran, Islamic Republic of Iran)

14. The Executive Director had noted in her annual report that 60 per cent of the population growth in developing countries during 1992 had taken place in Asia. Allocation of funds at the regional and country levels should therefore reflect that proportion and countries with high population growth rates should be assisted in the implementation of their national plans.

15. He wished to draw attention to the current trend towards limiting population activities to birth control and family planning. Family planning, however, could not be seen in isolation from human resource development and from other population activities, such as education, family welfare, data collection and analysis, formulation of supportive policies, health care, and population distribution. UNFPA needed support for carrying out that broad range of activities.

16. The success of international assistance in attaining its objectives depended to a great extent on the establishment of a subtle balance between the role of international and national actors. Specifically, international assistance should respect the national policies and priorities of the recipient countries.

17. With regard to resolution 47/199, his Government fully supported the activities of UNFPA in extending access for its field offices to national expertise and in encouraging national execution of programmes and projects. Such an approach reduced costs and enhanced the efficiency of UNFPA, since national experts, who spoke the same language as the target population and were familiar with its culture and values, contributed to the expeditious implementation of projects.

18. On the question of inter-agency coordination, his delegation believed that operational activities, organizations and agencies in the United Nations system in the field should share common premises in order to enhance coordination and prevent the misallocation of resources.

19. While there was general agreement that population activities were an indivisible factor in sustainable development, the total contributions made to UNFPA in 1992 seemed to suggest that investing in people was not an important issue for the international community. Many restrictive guidelines and criteria had been placed on the Executive Director, thereby depriving her of the flexibility required for the proper functioning of UNFPA. In his view, the problem lay in the provision of adequate financial resources on a predictable basis and he hoped that the preparatory process for the International Conference on Population and Development would mark a turning-point in that regard.

20. Mr. RUKIKAIRE (Observer for Uganda) said that the second country programme for Uganda had brought about a better understanding of the effects of population factors on development. The programme had covered such areas as the integration of population variables into development planning; maternal and child health and family planning (MCH/FP) services; IEC in formal and informal sectors; the 1991 population and housing census; population research and training; population policy and development planning; and women in development.

21. The country programme had provided assistance in the formulation of a national population policy and in the establishment of a population secretariat

(Mr. Rukikaire, Observer, Uganda)

at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. It had also contributed to increasing public awareness through seminars and workshops organized for policy makers, planners and the general public; to the establishment of project management units in ministries and district administrations; to the introduction of information and documentation systems; and to the creation of a department of population studies and M.A. and Ph.D. programmes at Makerere University.

22. The overall goal of the national population policy of Uganda was to improve the quality of life of the population, which had increased threefold between 1948 and 1991. The population was characterized by high levels of morbidity, mortality and fertility and by a very high dependency ratio, since 47.3 per cent of the population was under the age of 15. The situation had been aggravated by the current AIDS epidemic and by the deterioration in socio-economic conditions. High infant mortality rates had led to more births for couples and the consequent inability of the latter to meet the basis needs of their large families. The national population policy sought to lower morbidity and mortality, especially among women and children under five years; lower the incidence of high-risk births; encourage a family-size norm that would enhance the health and welfare of the family; integrate and balance rural-urban development; alleviate poverty; improve the status of women and enhance their role in development; promote the integration of population factors into sector planning; and strengthen the demographic and socio-economic database, as well as research and national capacity-building.

23. Strategies for achieving those objectives included the promotion of IEC research in the field of population and development; strengthening existing population information networks and databanks at the local and national levels; reactivating mobile film units; and training a cadre of population communicators. The policy would also promote the integration of maternal and child health services into the overall health services; promote safe motherhood and birth intervals of two to three years; reduce high-risk pregnancies and fertility rates; enforce a minimum legal age of 18 years for marriage; and intensify efforts to prevent and control the spread of AIDS. Other strategies would focus on the labour force and employment, education, housing and related services, women in development, children and youth, the elderly and the disabled, food and nutrition, the environment, and data collection and research.

24. His delegation supported the Executive Director in her concern over the dwindling resources of UNFPA. Uganda was one of the poor performers in the field of population and relied on the assistance of UNFPA, which had already had an impact, despite limited resources. It was therefore saddening to note that the resource allocation for his country had been reduced for the third country programme. For poor countries, the question of population growth called for priority attention in order to break the vicious cycle of population explosion and poverty.

25. There was a close relationship between poverty, population and environmental degradation. Without the alleviation of poverty, there was very little hope of reducing environmental degradation. Likewise, without controlling population growth and improving the quality of life, particularly in the developing countries, there was little hope of reducing environmental degradation. If the developed countries were concerned about the environment,

(Mr. Rukikaire, Observer, Uganda)

the question of population must therefore be given the highest priority in terms of resource allocation.

26. Mrs. VASISHT (India) expressed her delegation's satisfaction with the excellent report submitted by the Executive Director of UNFPA. India fully supported reproductive freedom as a fundamental right which should be enjoyed by all couples and women. At the national level, the right to reproductive freedom was essential for the implementation of population policies, which was a key to development itself. The empowerment of women was also crucial, and UNFPA should help countries change attitudes and improve information systems in order to ensure successful empowerment of women in practice. Effective systems for disseminating information were needed to promote population activities in poor countries like India with very large populations.

27. Her delegation supported the priority-country system in view of the need to reconcile competing ends and very limited means and shared the view that maternal mortality should be taken into account in that connection. India would fully cooperate with UNFPA in selecting the relevant criteria to ensure the success of that approach. Referring to inter-agency cooperation, she said that while India fully supported General Assembly resolution 47/199, care should be taken not to expand the role of the resident coordinators. Resident coordinators were only instruments, and Governments should have the final word. Donors with the best intentions could never persuade anyone that they knew more about a particular country than the Government concerned, however corrupt and inefficient it might be perceived to be. Resident coordinators were outsiders and should be under the guidance of the Governments of the countries where they worked.

28. While non-governmental organizations played a very valuable role in such areas as population and environment, their activities should not infringe upon the role of Governments. UNFPA efforts in the field of contraception should include the regular supply of contraceptives, which was essential in order to maintain continued use. With the necessary organizational support, the Fund was generally in a better position to provide services to developing countries than any other organization.

29. No one could deny that evaluation reports were necessary and useful. Nevertheless, in order to ensure success, evaluation exercises should be broad-based and enjoy widespread support. The relationship between donor and recipient countries should not be a hostile or antagonistic one. Those who were better off should share with those who were deprived and suffering. While donor countries encountered certain difficulties, the problems faced by recipient countries should also be taken fully into account at all times. Often by force of circumstances, countries had no choice but to be on the receiving end. That situation was a fact of life and should not be exploited in negotiations. Countries should negotiate as equals, and with the right attitude inequalities could be smoothed over.

30. Ms. DOWSETT (New Zealand) said that the recent preparatory work for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development had highlighted the pressing need to focus attention on population activities and the fact that addressing population issues was central to promoting sustainable development.

(Ms. Dowsett, New Zealand)

There was a shared commitment on the part of Governments, non-governmental organizations and international agencies to placing individuals at the heart of population activities, and population programmes must recognize individual choices and responsibilities.

31. UNFPA continued to play a critical role as a catalyst for change in a highly sensitive and crucial area and had an important role in promoting planned and responsible parenthood. Her delegation supported the Fund's commitment to non-coercive policies in that regard. UNFPA rightfully enjoyed the high regard of Governments and non-governmental organizations because of its pivotal role in population activities around the world and its commitment to accountability, which was of critical importance for the ongoing reform of the United Nations development system. Proper monitoring and evaluation were essential for setting up effective accountability mechanisms.

32. Mr. KOZUSNICK (Austria) said that reducing population growth was one of the keys to solving the global problems confronting the world. While the need for additional funding was expanding rapidly in numerous areas, many traditional donors were facing increased budgetary constraints. In that regard, he expressed his delegation's particular appreciation for the efforts by the developing countries that had significantly stepped up their own contributions to the Fund. The general scarcity of resources underscored the need to ensure optimum use of such resources both within UNFPA and in the wider context of United Nations development activities. The evaluation exercise undertaken by Canada, Finland and Germany should be fully taken into account in shaping the Fund's activities and approaches as well as the ongoing restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations.

33. The Fund's leading role in activities at the bilateral and national level was based on its expertise and broader view of population issues within the overall perspective of human rights questions and sustainable development policies. The recognition by an impartial international body of the importance of sociocultural dimensions and traditional attitudes concerning issues like abortion, infertility, sexual practices and sexually transmitted diseases was essential in dealing with population questions. The idea of strengthening the Fund's advocacy and policy work was thus becoming increasingly justified. Lastly, he expressed satisfaction with the preparations for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, which would help focus public attention on the population issues and its linkage with the global problems of development, environment and migration.

34. The PRESIDENT said that the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) would now respond to questions raised by members of the Council concerning the progress report on UNFPA successor support cost arrangements (DP/1993/32 and Corr.1).

35. Mr. VAN ARENDONK (Deputy Executive Director (Programme), UNFPA), replying to the question raised by the delegation of the United Kingdom concerning the comments of UNFPA on the performance of the Inter-Agency Task Force, which monitored the implementation of the technical support services (TSS) system, said that the Task Force had performed well by providing an open forum within which to address the problems and issues identified by agency participants. In the two years since its establishment, it had made a notable contribution

(Mr. Van Arendonk)

towards improving coordination by providing information to participants and promoting closer working links between the various agencies.

36. On the question of what countries could do to improve the implementation of the system, he said that countries could help by informing their Government counterparts in the field about the TSS system as a tool available for use by Governments.

37. In answer to the question of how UNFPA reviewed the performance of its teams of national advisers, he said that performance reviews were carried out at various levels. The main evaluation criteria, however, were based on the response which the team received from the recipient country. UNFPA viewed the TSS system as providing a service to the country. If, therefore, the adviser received no requests for assistance, it meant that his particular technical skills were no longer needed in that country or that he failed to impart his skills adequately and should be replaced. The same system of evaluation through feedback from Governments and field offices was used in the case of national experts, who represented the first line of support for the teams.

38. Replying to a question raised by the delegation of Canada concerning ways of improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of the services provided through the TSS system, he said that the system as currently constituted was highly cost-effective, since a team of ten advisers covered several countries and was available not only for UNFPA-financed projects but also for government projects.

39. On the question of how UNFPA dealt with agencies which failed to implement programmes and projects satisfactorily, he said that the policy was to change the executing agency if projects were not effectively implemented.

40. Turning to the question raised by the delegation of Cuba concerning the need for TSS to reduce costs by not paying the honorariums of technical advisers, he said that such honorariums were met from a separate budget line and only travel costs and per diem allowances in the recipient country were charged to the programme.

41. With regard to recruitment of advisers in the area of women and population and development, he said that by the end of July 1993 the number of adviser posts filled by women would have increased to 30 out of an expected total of 133. While that was still a small percentage, the Fund was doing its best to increase the overall number of female advisers in teams. When the adviser teams had been set up, most of the incumbents in those posts had been males. Over time, the gender ratio would change. Technical backstopping plans were the basis for designing work schedules for the adviser teams. Some problems had arisen in the past because country directors had not fully understood how such plans were formulated or had problems forecasting long-term technical assistance needs. Together with the team leaders, however, the country directors had drafted the technical backstopping plans, which were currently in place.

42. UNFPA was very careful not to impose TSS on Governments. Team leaders could visit a country only if there was an official request to that effect from the Government or the country director. The first line of support was national advisers. The goal of TSS was to build up self-reliance so that Governments

(Mr. Van Arendonk)

could meet their own technical assistance needs. The country support teams were used to assist the country directors in monitoring the activities being conducted. That was very important in terms of the ongoing decentralization process. Those teams should be viewed not only as direct technical assistance to countries but also as tools enabling country directors and the Fund as a whole to monitor programmes and projects. The teams were also used in Programme Review and Strategy Development exercises and evaluation missions.

43. The guidelines in effect clearly spelled out the responsibilities and roles of Governments, country directors, field offices, team leaders and the agencies from which the team members came. The Fund observed those guidelines very strictly and sought to develop national self-reliance and give priority to the use of national experts and institutions. Under the TSS arrangement, there had been a number of visits to China to promote population education. Advisers had participated in the preparation of a project to integrate population education into the curriculum of junior middle schools, and a national training programme on population education and information services had been conducted in China. An adviser in the field of family planning had provided assistance to national advisers in that country.

44. The PRESIDENT said that the Director of the UNFPA Technical and Evaluation Division would now respond to questions raised by Council members in connection with the report of the Executive Director reviewing the Fund's experience in implementing the priority-country system (DP/1993/33).

45. Mr. SINGH (Director, Technical and Evaluation Division, UNFPA), said that for individual countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, the distribution of expenditures according to work-plan categories had changed over time. In the early stage of a programme, expenditures were concentrated on data collection and analysis, while at a later stage population policy formulation projects received a greater share of resources. Still later, IEC activities predominated, while in mature programmes expenditures on activities related to MCH/FP took on greater weight. The purpose of the priority-country system was to set global targets for UNFPA population assistance to priority developing countries. The target set by the Council was 80 per cent for priority countries by 1994. Within that overall target, resources were allocated at the country level through a more complex procedure based on Governing Council resolution 81/7, which enumerated eight criteria for allocation. While other factors were considered in the allocation of resources to individual countries, government acceptance would determine the kind of programme supported rather than the level of support.

46. There were important aspects of UNFPA support to priority countries that were not easily discerned in financial data. For example, UNFPA had strengthened its field infrastructure in priority countries. The Fund had also been flexible in adapting its programmes in those countries to take account of low levels of institutional, material and human-resource capabilities. UNFPA had thus provided longer-term support to priority countries for specialized training abroad for nationals at the middle and senior management levels and for resident technical advisory services. The Fund had also helped defray the cost of local programme personnel and had provided assistance in the construction and rehabilitation of service facilities.

(Mr. Singh)

47. Any objective system for designating priority countries would fail to select some countries which, for subjective reasons, appeared to be good candidates for priority status. UNFPA believed that the criteria chosen covered a broad range of social and economic phenomena important for development and at the same time met the practical requirement of data availability. The question of priority status should be kept entirely separate from that of allocation of resources by region, which took into account the priority needs of specific regions. Accordingly, the allocation target for priority countries should be maintained at the global level.

48. While the maternal mortality rate would be a valuable addition to the set of criteria used to determine priority status, it had been found that internationally comparable and reliable data were not widely available in that regard. Nevertheless, the Fund would, if requested, search for an indicator for reproductive health that was universally available, reliable and objective. Lastly, those countries for which UNDP had allocated indicative planning figures were eligible for UNFPA assistance. The comment regarding the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in paragraph 3 of document DP/1993/33 should be read in that context. Nevertheless, eligibility was one thing, and resource allocation was another. The actual allocation of resources would have to depend in all cases, including the CIS countries, on availability of resources and the applicability of the substantive and programme criteria used at any given time to allocate funds.

49. The PRESIDENT said that the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) would now introduce the report on collaboration of the United Nations Population Fund with the World Bank and the regional development banks (DP/1993/34 and Corr.1).

50. Mr. VAN ARENDONK (Deputy Executive Director (Programme), UNFPA) said that UNFPA assistance in the development and implementation of government population programmes was based on General Assembly resolutions 44/211 and 47/199. The Fund had forged closer links of collaboration with the World Bank and the regional development banks as a result of their growing interest and involvement in population activities at various levels and the Fund's recognition of the comparative advantages and complementarities that would be derived from such collaboration.

51. There was ongoing cooperation between UNFPA, the World Bank and the regional development banks in several countries in the various regions of the world. In all those efforts, particularly in the African region and in the Asia and Pacific region, substantive collaboration had taken place primarily in the areas of MCH/FP, IEC and data collection and analysis. The rehabilitation and development of health infrastructure from World Bank loans and grants had been complemented by the Fund's support for strengthening national capacities in the area of MCH/FP including the technical specification, provision and procurement of equipment and modern contraceptives.

52. UNFPA and the World Bank had worked together on regional projects, conferences and seminars in various parts of the world and had even planned joint initiatives at the regional level. One such initiative, in Africa, was the project funded by UNFPA and the World Bank on population policies and the social dimensions of structural adjustment services, which was aimed at

(Mr. Van Arendonk)

integrating population factors into the social dimensions of adjustment programmes by 1995.

53. At headquarters, UNFPA and the World Bank had frequently held and continued to hold consultative meetings to review comparative advantages and identify means and areas for increased cooperation and coordination in support of their various country programmes; at the global level, they had taken collaborative initiatives in such areas as contraceptive requirements and the Global Coalition for Africa.

54. The involvement of the regional development banks in population activities was quite recent; although initiatives in that regard were encouraging, they were still in their formative stages. The Fund had among other things assisted the African Development Bank in the incorporation of population into its country programmes. In the Latin American and Caribbean region collaborative efforts were ongoing between the Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank under which the Bank would fund an adolescent reproductive health project in Chile.

55. Collaboration between UNFPA and the banks based on the comparative advantages of the institutions concerned could be further strengthened. The Fund could help in the development of the overall programme framework and with the technical assistance requirements, while the banks could assist in the financing of construction, equipment and supplies. The ingredients for collaborative arrangements were in place. Governments must therefore now assign to the population field the priority it deserved.

56. Mr. HADDAD (World Bank) said that the review of collaboration between UNFPA and the Bank was very timely in view of the ongoing preparations for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, and also in view of the important role that the two institutions played in meeting the many challenges related to the attainment of sustainable economic and social development in the face of continued population increase in the developing countries.

57. Careful attention to inter-agency collaboration was all the more important since UNFPA and the World Bank were the two largest multilateral agencies providing population assistance; over the previous three years, they had jointly provided over $1 billion in grants and loan commitments to support projects in developing countries.

58. Cooperation between the two agencies could be broken down into formal and informal consultations, and country-specific, regional and global discussions. Formal, annual collaborative meetings had been held between the World Bank and UNFPA in all regions of the world. While such meetings broadly outlined activities to be pursued by the donor agencies in cooperation with Governments, the more important form of collaboration took place in the field.

59. Section III of the report (DP/1993/34 and Corr.1) gave several instances of the less formal element of the working relationship between the World Bank and UNFPA. Information-sharing, joint missions and common strategy-building at the country level helped to build on the complementarities in the programmes of both organizations. That type of consultation also increased the involvement of developing countries' Governments themselves in the management of donor activities.

(Mr. Haddad, World Bank)

60. The third type of cooperation covered global initiatives. In addition to their involvement in special programmes such as the Safe Motherhood Initiative and the Global Coalition for Africa, there was extensive coordination of data collection and analysis between the Bank and the Fund.

61. The Bank had also worked together with UNFPA, national representatives, non-governmental organizations and population experts in the preparations for the 1994 Conference. It had sought to ensure representation by high-level staff at each of the regional meetings, and had also sent staff to five of the six expert group meetings and to the Preparatory Committee meetings.

62. He endorsed the report's recommendations for further collaboration. Concrete steps could be taken to ensure complementarity between programmes and make the best use of each organization's comparative advantages, such as the Fund's technical expertise in contraceptive procurement and the Bank's extensive process of policy dialogue with Governments of developing countries.

63. Ms. TROOSTER (Netherlands) said that the report on collaboration of UNFPA with the World Bank and the regional development banks (DP/1993/34 and Corr.1) emphasized the differences in structures and procedures between the World Bank and UNFPA rather than differences in their substantial input and technical expertise. In her delegation's view, it was precisely in those areas that UNFPA, as a centre of excellence on population matters, should contribute to the population activities of the World Bank and regional banks. That role should go beyond the fund's role with regard to contraceptives procurement.

64. With regard to cooperation with regional development banks, she wondered whether UNFPA had been involved in the formulation of the population paper adopted by the Board of Directors of the African Development Bank in March 1993 and whether it had made any substantial contribution to it. She also wanted to know whether UNFPA had made a substantial contribution to the preparation of the World Bank's World Development Report. In connection with consultations on closer cooperation with the Asian Development Bank, she would appreciate an explanation of the term "working arrangements" and would like to know whether such arrangements could be compared to the cooperation agreement that had been concluded with the African Development Bank.

65. Ms. MAGUIRE (United States of America) said that, in the light of increasing unmet need for family planning, enhancing inter-agency cooperation and adopting collaborative and complementary approaches to population assistance was essential to the success of collective efforts. The United States Agency for International Development worked closely with UNFPA and the World Bank at headquarters, regional and country levels, and was partner in a number of collaborative activities - including the global initiative on contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs.

66. Enhanced substantive collaboration with the regional development banks as they expanded their involvement in population activities should be encouraged, as should the continued sharing of country-level population data and contraceptive requirements. In particular, the United States supported enhanced collaboration relating to the Fund's specialized contraceptive procurement role.

67. Lastly, collaborative discussions with ministries of finance and planning should be fostered in order to increase the level of host country resources committed to population and family planning, to integrate population concerns

(Ms. Maguire, United States)

into development planning and to ensure the involvement of all major development partners in the implementation of sound population policies and programmes.

68. Mr. MOYE (United Kingdom) said that his Government welcomed the clear recognition of the need for greater cooperation and coordination between UNFPA, the World Bank and the regional development banks, and hoped that bilateral donors and aid recipients would encourage and facilitate that development. His delegation would be interested in knowing from both the World Bank and UNFPA why they sometimes had difficulty in making much of an impact in the area of population and what they could do to improve performance. It also wondered whether UNFPA and the banks had already established or were planning to establish guidelines for recipient Governments to identify which population activities were appropriate for grant and loan assistance. An explanation of current UNFPA capacity in the area of population economics and of any plans to expand such capacity would be helpful. UNFPA could play a very useful role in increasing the dialogue between those who had expertise in that field and economists in other agencies whose knowledge in population development might be somewhat limited.

69. With regard to the Netherlands delegation's question about the African Development Bank, he said that the United Kingdom Government had provided consultancy assistance to the Bank in the preparation of the population paper.

70. Mr. VAN ARENDONK (Deputy Executive Director (Programme), UNFPA) said, in reply to the question raised by the Netherlands delegation, that he fully agreed that UNFPA should concentrate on its comparative advantages. The World Bank and the regional development banks could make use of the technical assistance system developed by the Fund in the field. UNFPA and the World Bank should also try to complement each other in the area of lending. With regard to the African Development Bank, UNFPA had helped in drafting the concept paper on population and had reviewed the final version. The Fund had also helped the Asian Development Bank create an awareness within its secretariat of population problems and was encouraging it to finance activities in various Asian countries. Currently, a UNFPA staff member was working at the Asian Development Bank.

71. Turning to the comments of the United States delegation, he said that the World Bank had asked UNFPA to identify a staff member or consultant to participate in needs assessment missions which the Bank undertook in individual countries. Conversely, the Fund always made it a point when it carried out its programme review and strategy development process at both the field and headquarters levels to ensure that there was very close contact between the country desk and the missions that were sent out. On the second point made by the United States delegation, he said that the World Bank and the regional banks could play a unique role in the policy dialogue. For population programmes to be sustainable, they would have to be supported financially over time by national Governments through their ministries of finance or economic planning. The banks would therefore have to convince Governments about the priority of population in the whole process of sustainable development and urge them to take out loans to finance population-related projects.

72. In response to the question raised by the United Kingdom delegation, he said that there were no guidelines as such for the identification of population

(Mr. Van Arendonk)

activities appropriate for grant and loan assistance; decisions regarding grants and loan assistance depended on the volume of the projected outlays. That was an area where complementarity between UNFPA, the World Bank and the regional banks was important; UNFPA could focus on technical assistance while the banks dealt with aspects requiring heavy financing. In connection with the Fund's capacity in the area of population economics, he said that the Fund was very interested in the sector, which it considered crucial. It had already held and was planning to hold further expert group meetings for economists dealing with the population issue. However, as UNFPA had limited staff, it did not intend to specialize in population economics. With regard to performance, he said that the projects which UNFPA and the World Bank had implemented together had been effective.

73. Mr. HADDAD (World Bank), responding to points raised by delegations, said that as a result of the integration of population-related work at the Bank with the whole area of human development in 1987, the Bank now had a better mechanism for discussing population issues with member countries. Moreover, the group that handled human development was part of the management team that discussed with the country concerned the country strategy for assistance. That had brought the discussion of population issues into the area of the discussion of economic development. As a result, the Bank had been able to overcome some of the political and cultural obstacles because population issues were now being discussed in the context of the overall macroeconomic dialogue with the countries. The Bank had thus been able to bring human development issues into the mainstream of the development agenda. At the same time, in all the Bank's work in different sectors, the area of population had been considered extremely important. For instance, in the World Bank Report 1992 - Development and the Environment the issue of population had been underscored.

74. Mr. ANDO (Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration), UNFPA), introducing the report of the Executive Director on the work plan for 1994-1997 and the request for programme expenditure authority (DP/1993/30), said that the Fund's total income from regular resources in 1992 had been $238.2 million, an increase of 6.3 per cent over 1991. However, project expenditures from regular resources had decreased by 25 per cent between 1991 and 1992. That reduction in project expenditures together with reductions in other expenditures had resulted in a balance of unexpended resources at the end of 1992 amounting to $33.6 million. Therefore, the resource utilization rate had been approximately 82 per cent in 1992 as compared to approximately 103 per cent in 1991. The 1992 resource utilization rate had been caused by favourable exchange rates yielding an income of $8 million more than expected and savings in administrative costs of about $8 million mainly as a result of delaying recruitment for vacant posts. Those two factors accounted for $16 million, or almost half of the year-end surplus. The remainder of the surplus, of $17 million, had been due to the more cautious approach adopted by the Fund to programming in order not to produce a year-end deficit for a third consecutive year; to a slowdown in the implementation of country programmes as a result of political or social instability in certain countries; and to the long start-up time required for new programmes.

75. The carry-over of resources from 1992 was expected to be absorbed by programmes in 1993, depending, inter alia, upon the amount of the United States contribution to the Fund for 1993. A portion of the decrease in project

expenditures had been directly attributable to the introduction of the successor support cost arrangements approved by the Council in decision 91/37. Henceforth, costs for advisers and costs included under intercountry projects expenditures would be reported under technical support services (TSS).

76. For the first time since 1986, the work plan had been prepared with the assumption of a significant contribution from the United States Government. Although the exact amounts of the United States contributions in 1993 and beyond were unknown to date, for purposes of planning the work plan assumed a United States contribution of $20 million in 1993 and $50 million in each subsequent year of the plan. At the same time, however, some of the Fund's traditional donors had been forced to reduce their contributions for 1993. Given those uncertainties, the 1994-1997 work plan reflected a more conservative approach to resource planning. Accordingly, even with a sizeable United States contribution, the increases in income from regular resources in each of the four years of the work plan would be 5.1 per cent instead of the 8 per cent calculated for the 1992 work plan. That more conservative approach resulted in an assumption of income from regular resources of approximately $1.2 billion for the period 1994-1997, or approximately $95 million more than had been estimated in 1992 for the period 1993-1996.

77. Multi-bilateral resources for the four-year period 1994-1997 had been estimated at $60 million, assuming $15 million for each year. A detailed calculation of those assumptions and the resulting amounts available to the programme was given in table H in document DP/1993/30.

78. With respect to the operational reserve, he said that in decision 91/36 the Governing Council had decided that the level of the reserve should be set at 20 per cent of general resources income. On the basis of an internal review conducted by UNFPA itself in 1993, the Executive Director had proposed that the level of the reserve should continue to be maintained at 20 per cent of the income from general resources, even though a relatively large carry-over was available from 1992. In order to maintain the level of the operational reserve at 20 per cent of general resources income, an additional $17 million must be added to the reserve in the 1994-1997 planning period. At the end of 1997, the level of the operational reserve would have reached $65 million. The distribution of the approximately $959 million in new programmable resources from regular resources was essentially the same as the distribution proposed in the work plan for the period 1993-1996.

79. He expressed his appreciation to the delegations of Romania and Japan for their supportive comments regarding the work-plan paper.

80. Introducing the report of the Executive Director on the status of financial implementation of Governing Council-approved country programmes and projects (DP/1993/31), he said that the report presented financial data concerning the schedule according to which country programmes would be approved by the Council. The report contained three sets of tables. Tables A.1 to A.8 showed the annual expenditures by country. Table B showed expenditures for new country programmes submitted by the Fund for approval in 1993. Table C presented the balance of UNFPA commitments for country programmes, which was the difference between the amount of UNFPA regular resources destined for country programmes and the amount of regular resources actually spent. That balance normally reflected the

(Mr. Ando)

remaining commitment of the Fund. However, if UNFPA submitted a new programme for a particular country, the remaining balance would be subsumed in the new country programme. Lastly, Table A.8 showed the portion of the commitment from regular resources that had been delivered.

81. The overall balance of current commitments for country programmes given in the report was approximately $447 million. If the Council approved all 15 of the Fund's programmes submitted in 1993, the total commitment of the Fund at the end of the 1993 session would increase by $77.7 million, to approximately $525 million. Given the uncertainties of the overall income situation of the Fund, the amount to be programmed from the Fund's regular resources would be subject to the availability of resources. It was important to make that point clear in order to avoid undermining programmes and thereby disappointing recipient Governments.

82. He appealed to Council members to provide the resources required to implement the 1994-1997 work plan in full and to implement the country programmes as planned.

83. Mr. PONCE (Ecuador) requested clarification regarding the reduction in the percentage of funds for Latin American and Caribbean country programmes. He noted that, whereas in 1989 the share of actual country programme expenditures for Latin America and the Caribbean had been 13.8 per cent by 1997 the percentage would have declined to 12.3 per cent. Furthermore, since 74 per cent of the funds for Latin America and the Caribbean had already been programmed, there was a possibility that funds for new programmes for Latin America and the Caribbean would be very limited. He also wished to know what criteria had been used in the reduction of expenditures for the region.

84. Mr. ANDO (Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration), UNFPA), responding to the points raised by the representative of Ecuador, said that despite the slight decline in resources for Latin America and the Caribbean, the total amount to be allocated to the region would increase in the future on a proportional basis.

85. As to the second point concerning the remaining resources available for country programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean, 26 per cent of country programme resources remained available. Any differences in the resource levels in comparison with previous years were attributable to differences in the programming cycles of the years in question.

86. Mrs. SADIK (Executive Director, UNFPA) said that she was pleased that the new format of the annual report had met with the approval of Council members and that the subject-matter of the report had been useful to the Nordic countries. The report for 1993 would serve as the foundation for similar reports in the future. She also appreciated the comments of several delegations, notably Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, the Netherlands and Uganda, regarding the responsiveness and effectiveness of UNFPA. Lastly, she believed Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan had offered useful comments concerning the need for an integrated approach.

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87. In regard to the question raised by the United Kingdom concerning UNFPA objectives, she referred to the goals outlined in the Fund's official mandate as established by the Economic and Social Council in 1973, which included, inter alia, knowledge-building and capacity-building in the population and family planning fields; promotion of awareness of population problems both within the United Nations system and in the public at large; and direct assistance to countries. The Fund was currently preparing to make its own review to determine whether those goals continued to be relevant twenty years later. That review would take place in 1994 and would also incorporate insights gained from the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development.

88. A number of delegations, particularly the United Kingdom, had commented favourably on the Fund's emphasis on family planning. She had also found constructive the observations of the United Kingdom regarding the need for greater concentration of resources at the field level and the need to respect reproductive rights in family planning programmes. She believed that the issue of reproductive rights needed to be raised more effectively in other international forums as well, such as the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights. Questions of population policy, reproductive rights, and women's and gender questions also needed to be addressed in other forums within the United Nations system, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Commission for Social Development.

89. She had listened with interest to the comments of Denmark, Finland and Canada regarding the results of the independent evaluation of UNFPA. She was gratified that the overall conclusion of the evaluation had been positive. Moreover, delegations could be confident that the Fund would take the necessary steps to address the problems discussed in the evaluation. In response to the comments of Denmark regarding the need for the Fund to assert itself more emphatically in its dealings with Governments, she said that the Fund had always been fighting an uphill battle to raise awareness of the population question at the national level and within the Organization, although UNFPA had always maintained a firm stance in its role as advocate with regard to population questions. It recognized that the population situation was changing rapidly and that changes could and should be made in order to make it more responsive to the environment in which it operated. For example, better use could be made of Programme Review and Strategy Development (PRSD) exercise, and closer cooperation could be achieved with non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

90. UNFPA was committed to ensuring that its methods and procedures were in-step with the principles and directives outlined in General Assembly resolution 47/199 on improving the operational activities of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. In that regard, she drew attention to a variety of UNFPA initiatives to strengthen national capacity-building, programme implementation and information, education and communication (IEC), including Country Support Teams and PRSDs. UNFPA was assisting in the development of an overall IEC country programme strategy based on the results of sociocultural studies of different segments of the Fund's target audiences.

91. She agreed with the comments of Canada and Finland concerning the need for better strategic choices, and said that improvements could be made in that area

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through more effective use of PRSDs and a more selective approach in approving programmes. In that connection, she noted that UNFPA had already made progress in reducing the number of projects from 3,910 to 1,499 since 1991; further reductions would be possible in the future. She also agreed with the observation by Germany that additional independent evaluations would be of value to UNFPA. Moreover, since additional evaluations had been planned, some consideration could be given to rationalizing the evaluation process to ensure that the resulting recommendations would be consistent with the Fund's overall mandate and with the directives of the Governing Council. The views expressed by India in that connection should receive particular consideration.

92. The comments made by a number of delegations concerning the importance of effective monitoring, evaluation, accountability and decentralization also had merit. For its part, UNFPA was very much aware of the importance of monitoring and evaluation to improve programme quality and effectiveness, particularly in the light of the growing decentralization of programme functions. The recent establishment of Country Support Teams had enhanced the Fund's monitoring capabilities in the field, and regular monitoring visits by team members had been programmed in the annual work plans and project budgets. The Fund's monitoring system was fully operational. The system included regular project and programme reviews to assess the timeliness of input deliveries and the quality of outputs as well as end-of-project evaluation. Steps had also been taken to systematize the process of reviewing project evaluation reports for quality control and to derive lessons for the future. In addition, the Fund consulted regularly with partner organizations such as the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) to strengthen, harmonize and streamline processes.

93. She agreed fully with the comments of Canada concerning the need for accountability in a decentralized management structure, particularly where financial questions were concerned. The Fund was in the process of strengthening accountability in the field and at headquarters by expanding its staff training programmes and improving recruiting and performance appraisal procedures. Those changes were already yielding significant improvements in terms of the quality of the Fund's personnel and the quality of their work. UNFPA personnel also participated in the management coordination workshops for field representatives which had been organized throughout the United Nations system.

94. In reference to the question of reproductive freedom, she agreed wholeheartedly with the views expressed by the United States and the Netherlands. In pursuing its mandate in the population field, the Fund must always be aware of the universal and inalienable nature of human rights. UNFPA fully adhered to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Proclamation of Tehran (1968). In reference to the statement of the United States, she wished to reiterate the firmly held position of UNFPA that coercion had no place in family planning programmes. With respect to the specific question of UNFPA participation in family planning programmes in China, she said that the Fund had discussed the question of reproductive freedom many times with Chinese officials and was monitoring its projects in that country closely to ensure adherence to universally accepted standards of human rights. The Chinese Government had assured the Fund that the one-child policy was strictly voluntary, and that while there had been problems with "unsatisfactory performance" by individual family-planning workers, those workers had been punished.

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95. With respect to the comments of Finland and Denmark regarding the decrease in the programme allocation for sub-Saharan Africa, she said that various factors beyond the control of the Fund had necessitated the decrease in question. First, uncertainty with regard to anticipated levels of programme resources forced the Fund to adopt a conservative approach to programme budgeting. Second, political turmoil and social unrest in some countries in the region had required the interruption of population programmes. Furthermore, since 1991 a large number of new country programmes in the region had just been starting to become active. UNFPA would spare no effort to expand programmes further in the Africa region. In that connection, she reported that the 1993 allocation to the region represented an 8 per cent increase over the 1992 allocation.

96. With respect to UNFPA activities in the area of women, population and development, she said the Fund had been actively seeking to incorporate women's perspectives in its activities. For example, a women's module had been developed for use in Country Support Team training programmes as well as a "Gender Reporting Form" to assess the impact of programmes on women prior to their approval. In addition, programme reviews focusing on women's questions had been conducted in preparation for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the World Conference on Women to be held in 1995.

97. In regard to a question by the Netherlands regarding the possibility of transferring the Global Training Programme in Population from The Hague to an African country, she said that the Fund was in the final stages of its search for an appropriate host country. The Fund expected that the next programme course would take place at the new site. With respect to the suggestion of Romania to create a separate UNFPA division for the European region, she said such a division was not practical either from a managerial or financial point of view. As to the request for further information on programmes in European countries, she said she would provide that information to all who requested it.

98. In connection with the Fund's collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), she said that the Fund had recently organized a meeting of African NGOs in conjunction with the Third African Population Conference at Dakar in December 1992. The Fund fully endorsed the appeal made in the Dakar Declaration regarding the need to strengthen the capacity of NGOs in the population field.

99. In response to a question from the Netherlands about Fund programmes for adolescents, she said that most UNFPA country programmes were focusing on the needs of adolescents, particularly girls.

100. She expressed her agreement with the point raised by Indonesia regarding the important contribution of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) in the population field. She said that the Fund fully supported the recommendations concerning TCDC in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. Moreover, the Fund was in the process of revising its guidelines concerning TCDC and those revised guidelines were expected to enhance further the use of TCDC in UNFPA programmes and projects.

101. In response to a question from the Netherlands regarding Fund activities for HIV/AIDS prevention, she said that UNFPA would fully collaborate in the

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implementation of the recent World Health Organization (WHO) resolution requesting the WHO Director-General to undertake a study on HIV/AIDS prevention.

102. She welcomed the statements made by Japan, Switzerland, Indonesia and Bangladesh regarding the growing demand for family planning programmes in developing countries and the growing need for additional resources. The Fund had taken note of the need mentioned by several delegations to link the availability of resources closely to effectiveness. UNFPA was committed to making the best possible use of every contribution.

103. Lastly, she thanked Denmark for raising the question of multi-bilateral resources. She noted that 1992 had been a very successful year for the raising of extrabudgetary resources. However, the time had perhaps come to re-examine the multi-bilateral funding modality and its impact on the broad range of Fund activities.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 2 June 1993, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. HADID	(Algeria)
later:	Mr. ZAIRAN (Vice-President)	(Islamic Republic of Iran)
later:	Mr. HADID	

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

(b) Matters relating to the programming cycles (DP/1993/69)

1. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Council) drew attention to document DP/1993/69, whereby the Administrator informed the Council that he had received communications from Eritrea and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia requesting that they be given recipient status. If the Council approved the requests those countries would be provided with an indicative planning figure (IPF) in accordance with the provisions of Council decision 90/34.

(c) National execution and agency support costs (DP/1993/22)

2. Mr. GOMEZ (Associate Administrator), introducing the report on national execution and agency support costs (DP/1993/22), said that it gave details on the status of implementation of Council decisions 91/32 and 92/22, which set out the legislative framework for the new arrangements for agency support costs. Those new arrangements had been fully effective since July 1992. As of that date, the target of $500 million of approvals established by the Council had been exceeded.

3. Detailed guidelines for the new arrangements had been worked out jointly with the agencies and were currently in force in the field. Several improvements had been made following field testing of the guidelines; it was expected that they would be incorporated in the UNDP Programme and Projects Manual in 1993.

4. UNDP and the agencies had completed an extensive training programme for over 600 government, agency and UNDP personnel. Further country level training would be provided by the people already trained, with continued support from UNDP and the agencies.

5. Regarding the status of the financial provisions authorized by the Council in decision 91/32 for the new arrangements, he noted that, because of the serious erosion in UNDP resources for the fifth programming cycle, the target of annual increases in contributions of 8 per cent that had been assumed in decision 90/34 was unlikely to be achieved, and the IPFs for the fifth cycle might not be fully financed at the level anticipated. The Administrator had decided to carry out programme planning under the assumption that only 75 per cent of the established IPFs would be available for the cycle. In addition, expenditure targets for 1993 and 1994 had been revised.

6. The resource constraints and reductions in expenditure targets had led to a decline in project approvals in 1992 and 1993. While the introduction of new programming initiatives might have had some impact on the slow-down, the programme build-up achieved thus far in the fifth cycle was commensurate with available and projected resources. Table 1 of the report presented a summary of the total programme budgets approved thus far under various types of execution arrangements. As of 25 May 1993, 68 per cent of IPF resources had been approved, including 17 per cent under the new arrangements.

(Mr. Gomez)

7. There had been a significant change in the pattern of execution arrangements in recent years, in response to General Assembly resolution 44/211 as well as various decisions of the Council. New projects approved for national execution as a percentage of all new approvals had increased, and that trend was expected to accelerate in 1993 and beyond. Approval of new projects for execution by the agencies had correspondingly declined. However, there had been a significant increase in agency implementation of components of nationally executed projects. Estimates of support cost income were presented in table 2 of the report. The current estimate of resources needed to finance the new arrangements amounted to $473 million, approximately 25 per cent less than the original figure.

8. The agencies had expressed concern over the slow-down in new project approvals and the reduction in the flow of support cost resources. Effective operational modalities for the implementation of the new arrangements had been developed, and field personnel had been trained. Unfortunately, because of the resource situation, there might not be a sufficient critical mass of new project approvals in the fifth cycle to which those new arrangements could be applied.

9. As noted in paragraphs 16 to 19 of the report, although the Council had decided, in decision 91/32, that resources to the extent of 10 per cent of project value of nationally executed projects should be added to the IPF subline, the Administrator believed that the provisions of the IPF add-on legislation should be continued for one more year and he therefore intended to provide 13 per cent of 1992 project expenditures relating to nationally executed projects approved before 1 January 1992 as an add-on to the IPFs of the countries concerned. That solution was "cost neutral" in that no additional resources were called for.

10. Turning to technical support services at the programme level (TSS-1), he said that implementation of the work programme for the biennium 1992-1993 was fully under way. Over 60 per cent of the activities had either been completed or reached an advanced stage of implementation. The TSS-1 facility was becoming an important component of the overall efforts of the United Nations system to move "upstream" in the programme/project cycle, and provided an opportunity to mobilize the capacity of the United Nations agencies in support of those activities. Work was under way on the programme for the 1994-1995 biennium. The process of identification and formulation of proposals for TSS-1 financing had been initiated in the field and was governed by the needs identified at the country level. The final work programme would be submitted to the Council in February 1994.

11. In view of the limited use made thus far of the Technical Support Services at the Project Level (TSS-2), a review of all nationally executed projects, including those approved under the old arrangements, had been undertaken in the field with a view to determining whether technical support financed by TSS-2 budgets was required. Some budgets had been approved, as a result, and the exercise had highlighted the need for UNDP to strengthen its own accountability by having TSS-2 built in, pari passu, in nationally executed projects. Thus, it was expected that the initial allocation of $25 million would be approved by early 1994.

(Mr. Gomez)

12. The smaller technical agencies had expressed considerable concern about the decline of projects approved in the sectors represented by them. UNDP would hold consultations with them to develop proposals for enhancing their participation in UNDP-financed activities; it was possible that many of them would choose to participate in the new arrangements. UNDP, along with the agencies, continued to monitor carefully the implementation of the new arrangements. An internal assessment was expected to be carried out later in 1993, and a full external evaluation in 1994.

13. Mr. FORBES WATT (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), speaking as Chairman of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Support Costs, said that in recent years the five agencies directly concerned and UNDP had had consultations, in the Inter-Agency Task Force on Support Costs and in other forums, on the implementation of the successor arrangements. They had cooperated in holding extensive field briefings for the new system; there had also been internal efforts by each agency to brief personnel. The tightening UNDP resource environment had been a major constraint since it meant that as the five agencies completed the projects from the old system, there were not many projects under the new system. Approvals under the new system were much lower than expected; the prospects from 1994 onwards required close monitoring.

14. The increase in national execution had to some extent been accompanied by increasing agency implementation of some parts of projects, but the associated flow of TSS-2 demand, and services, had yet to materialize. The current level of TSS-2 approvals was surprisingly low; both UNDP and the agencies were giving priority to that situation, since it was the cornerstone of the successor arrangements.

15. The Task Force had concluded that TSS-1 had been a largely positive experience, though there had been some difficulties at the outset. There had been a very solid demand from the field for such "upstream" work by the specialized agencies, as reflected in current preparations for the second TSS-1 work programme. Agencies had linked their TSS-1 contribution to their regular programme activities and there had been a multiplier effect in many cases. UNDP and the agencies had worked together to remove bureaucratic and other obstacles, avoid small-scale scattering and ensure the necessary flexibility in the actual operations.

16. In connection with the independent evaluation of the successor arrangements to be submitted in June 1994, the Task Force had discussed a preliminary set of performance indicators for both UNDP and the agencies. It would attempt to differentiate between the actual performance of the arrangements over the 1992-1993 period and the effects of UNDP resource shortfalls. Close attention would have to be paid to the agency contribution to nationally executed projects, and in particular the provision of TSS-2 services in various stages of the project cycle.

17. The Task Force's meeting in April 1993 had been attended by a number of the smaller technical agencies of the system, which had been experiencing cutbacks in their UNDP-funded programmes. All the agencies present at that meeting had expressed interest in more active cooperation with the Office for Project Services (OPS) in order to ensure a productive and efficient division of labour

(Mr. Forbes Watt, FAO)

between the various operational and specialized parts of the system for the benefit of developing countries.

18. Mr. DJIWATAMPU (International Telecommunication Union) said that the small technical agencies had frequently expressed reservations about the programme approach which, if strictly applied, would sharply reduce their global and regional activities. Telecommunication networks knew no national boundaries, and an integrated and harmonized network was needed with global interconnectivity. The restrictions imposed by the programme approach and the slash in the regional IPF affected ITU's regional and global mandates, and the consequences would be felt throughout the United Nations system as well as in the developing countries. At the national level, the priority themes that would be adopted under the programme approach would exclude areas of concern to the small technical agencies, greatly reducing the prospects for their participation in United Nations operational activities. The inputs of the smaller technical agencies provided overall balance to country programmes; without it the development process would be severely jeopardized and, in extreme cases, the security of State and individuals could be threatened.

19. ITU had long expressed its support for national execution, and had pioneered its implementation over a decade ago, particularly in Latin America. However, it believed that national execution should be allowed to develop naturally as national capacity became available. When dealing with complex and rapidly changing technology, it was important to maintain a certain degree of presence alongside national execution. It was also necessary to distinguish between national execution and national implementation; technical agency presence in either modality would ensure the sustainability of technical excellence at the country level.

20. On the question of support costs, it seemed that there were no prospects of an increase in new approvals in the new cycle, and that further cuts in IPFs were likely. A solution to the problem must be found, for the technical agencies represented key sectoral developmental areas in developing countries. If the situation were allowed to persist it would tend to undermine the development process at the country level, and could lead to an irreversible loss of highly specialized technical capacity which could not easily be replenished were the resource situation to improve. ITU was convinced that, by providing the right assistance to developing countries, especially the least developed countries, the donor countries could secure a wider market for their industries and services.

21. ITU's decision to create the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) and establish a regional presence had been intended, inter alia, to meet the growing requirements of the Governments of developing countries. ITU had expected its development partners, particularly UNDP and other multilateral financing organizations, to respond by increasing financial support for telecommunication projects. The regional presence policy, already undermined by the withdrawal of sectoral support funds, was being weakened by the sudden discontinuation of regional projects and a virtual standstill in approval of new national projects. Africa was being hit the hardest, and the continent's economic integration process, which African leaders had pledged to achieve by the year 2000, might well be jeopardized.

(Mr. Djiwatampu, ITU)

22. ITU's field activities were being further eroded by consultants employed by various organizations including the World Bank. It was ITU's policy to work with the private sector in telecommunication development, but it had to maintain transparency and neutrality in its technical advice to developing countries and ensure that internationally agreed regulations, standards and equipment specifications were strictly respected. Uncoordinated action at the national level by private consultants could jeopardize that work.

23. UNDP should embark on new negotiations with the small technical agencies to try to find concrete ways to alleviate the situation.

24. Mr. MORALES CARBALLO (Cuba) said that some aspects of the Administrator's report on national execution and agency support costs (DP/1993/22) gave rise to concern. Cuba had already made the 25 per cent reduction in its IPFs for each of its 12 national projects and had, since the beginning of the fifth cycle and even before, made a tremendous effort to encourage national implementation, with the result that of its 12 national programmes 11 had been implemented by the national Government. However, while it was true that the policy of national execution provided the countries concerned with a great opportunity, those countries must be ready to carry out such national implementation effectively. Moreover, it was unclear from a reading of paragraphs 16-19 of the Administrator's report whether countries, such as Cuba, which had completed their nationally executed projects early, would continue to receive the 13 per cent add-on referred to in paragraph 19 for the remainder of the current cycle. It was to be hoped that countries which had completed their projects early would not be penalized for so doing.

25. Mr. LINCOLN (World Meteorological Organization (WMO)) said that, whereas for the three years prior to 1992 WMO's technical cooperation programme had included projects amounting to between US$ 15 and 16 million, projects approved in 1992 amounted to only US$ 3 million. Only four projects were approved in 1992, as compared to 44 new projects approved in 1987. The decrease in donations to UNDP, along with changes in funding sources had contributed to the low approval rate. The number of nationally executed projects in the field of meteorology and hydrology was very small.

26. Another factor in the apparent reduction in meteorology and hydrology projects was the trend to ensure that all projects were within country programmes. Small technical specialized agencies did not have country representation and were therefore not often involved in the preparation of national development plans. If projects to strengthen basic infrastructures in developing countries were not approved, then the basic capability for providing meteorological and hydrological technical support for agricultural production, aviation safety, hydroelectric planning, etc. would be reduced or even lost. If WMO and other small technical specialized agencies were cut out of the formal execution of projects in their area of expertise, then sectoral support and project development fund facilities needed to be expanded to provide other funding with which to continue their assistance. A small ad hoc task group should be set up to discuss the best way to encourage the retention of the technical and scientific capability within the agencies and to provide the necessary know-how to ensure that projects were executed in a cost-effective manner.

27. Mr. MARRERO (United States) said that his Government had serious reservations as to whether the support cost system could function in light of reduced core revenues. In order for the arrangements to function equitably, the agencies should be involved at the project design stage and the pace of UNDP's project approval process should be quickened so as to infuse the system with appropriate and sufficient revenues.

28. The impact of the support cost arrangements on the United Nations development system was troublesome. The required review should be undertaken immediately and should examine both the procedural aspects and the long-term viability of that system.

29. Mr. CANTINI (Italy) expressed concern with respect to the issue of agency support costs. While his delegation had been pleased to hear that a level of over $600 million of project budgets had been approved under the old arrangements, it regretted the delay in the start of the training programmes for the application of the new mechanisms. That delay had aggravated the situation caused by the erosion in the outlook for resources for 1993 and the consequent slow-down in new project approvals in the fifth programming cycle.

30. Italy was particularly concerned about the trend of TSS-2. As was stated in the report by the Administrator, only $3.5 million out of the $60 million allocated to it had been utilized thus far. There was a clear linkage between that situation and the delay in the training programme. The lack of training had contributed to a failure by field personnel to take sufficient account of the need for associating the specialized agencies with the implementation of the nationally executed projects at an early stage in the project cycle.

31. His delegation considered that UNDP should continue to consult frequently with the interested agencies, in order to monitor effectively the implementation of the new arrangements. It also felt that the review and evaluation of the new mechanism of agency support costs should take place as soon as possible and in any case not later than February 1994.

32. Mr. LUNDBORG (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that he would like to offer some general comments at the current stage. Although implementation of the new system had been slow, the Nordic countries recognized that, because of its complexity and scope, it would take some time to bring it into effective operation. In that connection, the importance of the training programmes in the application of the new arrangements, and the close connection between the new arrangements and national execution, should be emphasized. From that point of view, it was encouraging that there had been a clear increase in the number of nationally executed projects. The Administrator's report also made it clear that the specialized agencies could continue to play an important role even in nationally executed projects. The Nordic countries also welcomed the fact that UNDP was continuing to consult with the agencies on the implementation of the new system.

33. Mr. CLAVIJO (Observer for Colombia) said that while his delegation had been in favour of the new support cost structure, it was clear from paragraph 10 of the Administrator's report (DP/1993/22) that difficulties would be encountered in implementing the new system. His delegation was concerned that the scale of resources allocated to each country might be too small to permit effective

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execution of the national projects; a minimum level of funding must be made available not only centrally but in each of the countries concerned. His delegation also considered that the question raised by the Cuban representative was valid and required clarification.

34. Mr. PONCE (Ecuador) agreed with the representatives of Colombia and Cuba that the reduction in funding was regrettable because of the difficulties it was creating for developing countries. Paragraph 17 of the Administrator's report, and particularly its last sentence, also aroused some concern on his delegation's part; he would like to know what criteria the administration had used in selecting projects. His delegation was also concerned at the high level of resort to external consultants referred to in paragraph 24, and would ask whether something could be done to reduce that level.

35. Mr. GUO Xianzhi (China) said that the new support cost arrangements seemed rather complex and inefficient and he wondered whether they could be simplified. The new system should, to the extent possible, serve country programmes and be linked as closely as possible to them. Moreover, authority to endorse projects should be transferred to the field offices, which had a better understanding of the local situation than Headquarters.

36. China had always supported the national execution and had explored ways of making greater use of that system. As a result of that policy, its own national execution capabilities had been strengthened. It nevertheless considered that the system must be implemented gradually and on the basis of the actual capacities of the countries concerned, rather than uniformly throughout the world. It would be useful from that point of view for UNDP to train project personnel, particularly financial staff; his delegation hoped that UNDP would make a serious study of that recommendation and submit proposals for implementing it at the next session. The national execution policy was intended to strengthen the capacities of the recipient countries to carry out projects; his delegation hoped that UNDP would encourage such national execution and avoid implementation by Headquarters.

37. Ms. KNUTSON (Canada) welcomed the fact that the process of formulating the TSS-1 proposals for 1994-1995 was to begin in the field and would be governed by priorities and needs identified at country level, in contrast to the headquarters-driven process followed in 1992-1993. The delegation of authority to the resident representatives for the formulation and approval of TSS-2 budgets was also to be commended, although in some cases it had led to duplication of technical assistance and closer monitoring was required. The success of the tripartite field workshops was to be welcomed, as was the willingness of the smaller specialized agencies to become more involved in upstream, policy-related areas.

38. While welcoming the growing importance of national execution, she would be interested to know the reasons for the dramatic growth rate in the previous two years, a trend which seemed set to continue and which would entail greater support and scrutiny in the field. For national execution to operate effectively, a credible national recruitment service was required, encompassing a broad range of expertise from varied sources, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector. In that connection, she referred to the

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meeting held in Cairo in March 1993 sponsored by the Department of Economic and Social Development, which had been attended by an impressive number of national recruitment services from developing countries. She wondered what progress and support UNDP had provided in that area to identify and mobilize the national expertise which was vital for a fresh approach to technical cooperation.

39. Mr. KAZUSNIK (Austria) said his delegation was satisfied that upstream studies financed by TSS-1 had been so well received by the field offices and Governments, but was concerned by the very low use of TSS-2, specifically with regard to the increase in national execution. The current resource situation which, under the new regime of successor arrangements had put additional strain on the supplementary agencies, could have negative effects on the United Nations operational activities.

40. Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) said his delegation fully supported the principles behind the new support cost regime which encouraged a more technical focus among the agencies and promoted a more flexible approach to national execution. While his delegation fully understood the constraints engendered by the current international resource climate, it questioned why the proportion of support cost for agencies was so low. The agencies were not sufficiently involved at the early stages of project preparation, and thus could not provide the technical backstopping which had been originally envisaged. His delegation wondered whether UNDP had any further idea of the extent of backstopping by the five agencies and by other agencies.

41. National execution could not occur until national capacity had been established, and his delegation questioned whether UNDP could assure that full and necessary capacity would be in place to enable countries to plan, execute and backstop. He welcomed holding further informal consultations in order to fully understand the constraints and complexities of the scheme.

42. Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia) said that the success of past human resource development programmes was reflected in national capacity improvement and an increase in the use of national execution. His delegation believed that national execution should be allowed to come naturally as national capacity became available.

43. The sudden discontinuation of regional projects such as telecommunication projects in Africa was cause for concern, as the development of telecommunications in developing countries was essential to their growth. Regarding successor arrangements for agency support cost, his delegation felt that the training workshop had been extremely useful in enabling all participants to better understand the policy framework for execution and implementation.

44. Mr. BORJA DE MOZOTA (France) referring to the planned consultations with smaller technical agencies mentioned in section VI of the report of the Administrator, said that his delegation would like to know which particular agencies were involved.

45. Mrs. AMERASEKARE (Observer for Sri Lanka) said that not enough was being done to promote the national execution of projects. National execution was essential in helping to build up national capacity and should be given every possible encouragement. She was also concerned at the policy of paying lower salaries to local experts and felt that reasonable remuneration should be provided in order to encourage national execution. Technical backstopping was also of vital importance for national execution and should be provided in good time and at the appropriate level.

46. Mr. ZIARAN (Islamic Republic of Iran) took the Chair.

47. Mr. GOMEZ (Associate Administrator) said that UNDP shared the concerns expressed by the five agencies subject to the new regime and by those operating under the old arrangements. However, the question was not merely one of finance but also of the agencies' role as members of the international community. UNDP fully recognized their predicament and was open to dialogue. It particularly looked forward to the consultations to be held with the smaller technical agencies, which, to answer the question put by the representative of France, included all those agencies not yet subject to the new regime. Before replying to other specific questions, he wished to point out that national execution was not governed by resolutions or decisions of the Governing Council, but by General Assembly resolution 47/199 under which national execution was considered to be the norm.

48. In reply to the representative of Cuba, he explained that for 1992 projects approved by the specified date would be reimbursed at the rate of 13 per cent under the new arrangements, but that those approved subsequently would not. That decision was not arbitrary but arose from Governing Council resolution 90/26 on agency support costs, under which it had been decided to create a sub-line within country indicative planning figures. Under paragraph 12 of the resolution, resources transferred to the country indicative planning figure sub-line could be used to finance support services from external agents and resources saved by not having to compensate external agents would be available for use within the country programme in accordance with national priorities and taking into account the desire to promote the development of national capacity.

49. He agreed wholeheartedly with the representative of the United States concerning the need to secure agency intervention at the design stage of projects. He was concerned at the low rate of utilization of TSS-2, the main UNDP facility for that purpose, but noted that measures were being taken jointly by UNDP and the agencies in order to remedy the situation.

50. Responding to the concern expressed by the representative of the United Kingdom at the fact that only 75 per cent of the TSS-2 allocation was likely to be programmed during the cycle, he pointed out that the initial theoretical total of $25 million was no longer available because of resource constraints and that the TSS-2 budget had been reduced by 25 per cent as a consequence.

51. He agreed with the representative of the United States that approval procedures needed to be accelerated, but pointed out that 68 per cent of available resources had already been approved only 18 months into the current cycle. In the absence of any indication that contributions would improve in 1995 and 1996, the Administrator was obliged to proceed with caution. UNDP did

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intend to launch an early review of the arrangements and was also looking forward to the report to be drawn up by independent consultants, which would be submitted to the Governing Council in June 1994.

52. He shared the views expressed by the representative of Italy concerning the importance of training and the regrettable delays in the training programmes. In reply to the concern expressed by the representative of Colombia over the scarcity of resources, he stressed that any review of the situation must focus on efficiency and effectiveness. He agreed with the representative of China concerning the need to simplify procedures and noted that UNDP had done so in the case of the TSS-1 facility and had also delegated approval of the TSS-2 facility to the field.

53. The representative of Ecuador had raised the issue of the possible arbitrary selection of projects referred to in paragraph 17 of the report of the Administrator. The fact was that UNDP had refused to make an arbitrary selection. Faced with the need to identify $140 million of nationally implemented projects from an original total of $304 million of approved projects, UNDP had felt that the only logical solution was to continue financing add-ons throughout 1992 and not to make any selection among the projects to which the add-on provision was applicable. The representative of Ecuador was also concerned that 20 per cent of the total amount provided for agencies under the TSS-1 facility would be absorbed by consultants' fees. However, UNDP considered that figure to be a reasonable level, given that the agencies were required to use 80 per cent of their own resources.

54. He was grateful to the representative of China for pointing out that the new system was only one year old and was still relatively untested. In that connection, UNDP was open to constructive criticism and would welcome any bilateral contributions drawing attention to national execution practices and procedures which could be improved.

55. He agreed with the representative of Canada on the importance of the recent Cairo seminar and pointed out that the Department of Economic and Social Development had been developing its relations with national recruitment services over a period of many years.

56. In reply to the representative of Austria, he agreed that the constraints imposed by the current resource system had to be recognized. He also shared his concern regarding the TSS-2 facility, but noted that it should be available for programming by early 1994. Replying to a question by the representative of the United Kingdom, he explained that the support costs for the five large agencies had been low because of the relatively small number of projects so far approved under the new regime, following the efforts made to maximize the number of approvals under the old arrangements.

57. He agreed with the representative of Indonesia that the remarks made by the representative of ITU were highly relevant. However, he noted that total project approvals for ITU were slightly higher than in 1992, amounting to approximately $6.8 million. Replying to the representative of Sri Lanka, he

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said that local salaries were determined by looking at the best prevailing rates paid by local employers, including the public sector. In some cases local salary levels were as high as, if not higher than, international levels.

58. Mr. HADID (Algeria) resumed the Chair.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ASSISTANCE

(c) Assistance to the Palestinian people (DP/1993/19)

59. Mr. ROTHERMEL (Director, Programme of assistance to the Palestinian people) introducing the report on the programme of assistance to the Palestinian people (DP/1993/19), said that it sought to provide the Council with highly summarized information to facilitate assessment of performance of the programme. The positive aspects included a rapid expansion of available financial resources, a quickening pace of annual project expenditures and completion in 1992 of a number of large, high-impact projects.

60. One of the most intractable problems facing UNDP and all other development organizations had been the shortage of reliable data regarding the many development programmes and projects carried out under the auspices of donor Governments, NGOs and other multilateral and bilateral organizations. UNDP had played a prominent role in developing mechanisms for the exchange of reliable project information and for coordination among planners.

61. UNDP had had to adopt novel approaches to reach planning and programming decisions based on Palestinian priorities. Though the broad plans for the programme had been reviewed consistently through consultations with the Palestine Liberation Organization, in various parts of the world, detailed planning reviews with local Palestinian representatives in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip had not benefited from direct PLO representation, leading to some uncertainties in coordination. Ways of assuring enhanced PLO participation were currently being reviewed with the PLO leadership. UNDP had actively participated in several of the multilateral working groups of the Middle East peace process, and it was currently assisting in the implementation of activities designed to overcome the massive unemployment and underemployment in the occupied Palestinian territories.

62. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) said that hopes for rapid progress in the solution of the Palestinian question prompted by the peace talks begun at Madrid in October 1991 had been disappointed. Economic conditions in the occupied territory had recently worsened, particularly since the arrival of Mr. Rabin's Labour Government, which had broken all records for simultaneous expulsions, numbers of people killed within a short space of time and the number of days on which the occupied territory had been sealed off, thus engendering an explosive situation without precedent. Unemployment had thereby been increased, the marketing of local agricultural produce and the import of goods had been hampered, and the free movement of some 2 million Palestinians within the territory and to and from Jerusalem had been prevented. Such closure and division of the occupied territory into four separate areas was a collective punishment, which was estimated to cost the Palestinian economy some $5 million daily, the equivalent in one month of all international aid provided to the

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Palestinian people. He therefore called for a rapid increase in all forms of assistance, particularly to the Gaza Strip. His delegation hoped that UNDP would allocate additional emergency resources from the budget of the fifth cycle and endeavour to obtain further resources from the donor countries with which to strengthen the budget of the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian people. He thanked all the countries and organizations involved for their support.

63. While commending the continuing efforts to provide economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, he said that the review of programmes contained in the report (DP/1993/19) was superficial, scant and incomplete. Furthermore, the language used should be consistent with Economic and Social Council resolutions 2026 (LXI) of 1976 and 2100 (LXIII) of 1977 and other relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and state that any attempt to draw up new priorities should be made in prior consultation and close cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The previous month, the Palestinian side had proposed an outline for a comprehensive Palestinian national development plan, aimed at establishing new structures and institutions and adopting new policies in order to treat the Palestinian economy for the destructive effects of the long years of the Israeli occupation. The plan provided for large-scale job creation, support for construction and housing, the expansion and improvement of economic and social infrastructures, modernization of the productive sectors through the acquisition of appropriate advanced technology, and the achievement of equilibrium between the various geographic areas and population sectors. The plan would be submitted as soon as it was completed.

64. Within the programme of assistance, priority should be given to projects aimed at creating permanent jobs, particularly in agriculture and industry, and to infrastructure projects. It was also important to execute projects in remote and rural areas and among the poor and women, devoting particular attention to the Gaza Strip. Execution of the fishing port project in Gaza should begin immediately, and the feasibility studies for a commercial port in Gaza should be completed. All the administrative arrangements for the citrus factory in Gaza should be completed. Since the programme of work for the period from 1993 to 1996 was still at the broad outline stage, serious efforts should be made by UNDP officials and by relevant authorities of the PLO to determine which areas should be given absolute priority and to refine the programme of work with the donor agencies. It was important to bring the administrative and financial structures of the Programme of Assistance in line with the prevailing practices of UNDP. It was also vital to increase all forms of assistance from Headquarters.

65. He commended the report of the mission to review UNDP's programme in the occupied Palestinian territories. However, the report appeared to be based on political assumptions which were clearly at variance with General Assembly resolution 33/147 and the previously mentioned Economic and Social Council resolutions, and that had led to faulty conclusions. The report had not fully assessed the destructive impact of Israeli policies on the Palestinian economy; it appeared to take numerous unfulfilled Israeli promises at face value and assume that they would be implemented; and it sought to gloss over the unsound relationship between Israel and UNDP; that relationship should be given a thorough review. However, the report was a first step towards analysis of the

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impact of numerous projects being implemented in the occupied territory and his delegation was prepared to assist in that undertaking.

66. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had held an extremely useful seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people at UNESCO headquarters from 26 to 29 April 1993. The seminar had been attended by donor countries, United Nations agencies, representatives of the Palestinian people, regional organizations, NGOs and numerous experts. The Palestinian side had presented its outline of a Palestinian national development plan and the role of the international community in that plan. The seminar had considered the deteriorating conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Israel's responsibility for that deterioration, and the way Israel obstructed assistance to the Palestinian people. The participants had urged the international community to put pressure on Israel to lift the embargo from the occupied territory, to remove all obstacles to development and to allow all United Nations organizations and specialized agencies providing assistance to the Palestinian people to work freely and officially in the occupied territory. The Israeli occupation authorities at present allowed only UNDP and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to work there officially. The seminar had concluded that there was a need for increased cooperation on the provision of assistance to the Palestinian people among United Nations agencies and between them and the donor countries. A plan of work and an action mechanism should be drawn up rapidly. The main role in coordinating assistance should be played by the Secretary-General. He concluded by reiterating his full support for the Programme and his delegation's desire to develop its relationship with it.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 3 June 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1992 AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES (DP/1993/10 and Add.1-5)

1. Mr. DRAPER (Administrator), introducing the item, said that the current generation of world leaders had unparalleled opportunities to pursue global cooperation in a world in which the forces of democracy and economic liberalization had been unleashed, but in time of recession the risk was high that the pursuit of peace would be at the price of development. While peace-keeping budgets had risen more than sevenfold between 1991 and 1993, voluntary contributions to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Population Fund had declined by some 10 per cent between 1992 and 1993, and were in any case a small fraction of the $3.7 billion assigned to peace-keeping in 1993.

2. The values underlying the new global order could not be such as would tolerate the fact that 800 million people did not have enough to eat, that 1.3 billion people lived in absolute poverty, that 1 billion were illiterate, that two thirds of those illiterates were women, that 1,400 young children died every hour from malnutrition and disease, and that population levels were likely to have doubled by the time the young of today reached retirement age.

3. No humane world order worthy of international support could be based in the long term on force alone, and it had never been so critical for the United Nations to play a dynamic role in human and economic development. One could not claim to stand for peace, while turning one's back on human deprivation and the plundering of the natural environment. The price of prevention was always far less than that of remedial action.

4. UNDP was a wonderful and unique instrument for the pursuit of peace, democracy and development, which deserved strong support because of its established country presence, its focus on human development, its capacity-building role in the area of the environment, its leadership in the management of technical cooperation and its record of managerial efficiency.

5. UNDP was the only truly global network for general operational development at the disposal of the United Nations. Its multisectoral approach made it uniquely suited to address the many complex tasks that were increasingly falling within the domain of development. The success of such efforts as its recent support to countries holding multi-party elections, and its support for attempts to improve governance and/or to protect human rights depended in large measure on the trust that had been engendered at the country level, and on the logistical and management support which only UNDP could offer. UNDP had provided, or been asked to provide, electoral assistance to more than 30 countries; he paid particular tribute to the United Nations Volunteers in Cambodia who, in spite of extremely difficult circumstances, had helped to make the election in that country such a success. UNDP was working with the Centre for Human Rights on more than 50 projects, ranging from the creation of new constitutions in Lesotho and Zimbabwe to the establishment of a human rights commission in Honduras. The improvement of governance had become one of the three main thrusts of UNDP's regional programme in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in many other countries UNDP was supporting economic and public

administration reforms and working to improve financial management. UNDP's country presence was also critical for the effectiveness of United Nations programmes of humanitarian assistance; it would continue to be a reliable partner in providing operational and country-based support through the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. In all such areas it had to be recognized that a high profile by UNDP was often incompatible with sustainable results, although it was always a silent and strong partner in the field.

6. The second reason why UNDP deserved broad support, and could play a key role in the Agenda for Peace, was its focus on people. Its leadership in human development would continue to make significant contributions to the evolving consensus on the future shape and form of technical cooperation. The promotion of women, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in development were themes which had left their mark through countless country programmes.

7. Through the Human Development Report, which had received deserved attention both in developing countries and in donor capitals, UNDP had provided a vehicle for dialogue on the priorities that must underlie national development efforts and development cooperation. In recent years, human development had been a subject of debate in the parliaments of Italy, France, Sweden, Canada, Germany and the European Community, and, more importantly, had prompted action in developing countries. UNDP was now acting on requests from 28 countries for assistance in setting up national human development strategies and goals.

8. The third reason why UNDP was special and deserved strong support was that it had been designated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be the lead agency in organizing United Nations system-wide efforts towards capacity-building in the area of environment and development, had been given the mandate to help countries in their follow-up to the Conference by establishing and strengthening national coordination mechanisms and networks, and had been asked to help mobilize both internal and external resources for sustainable development. In all three of those tasks, it was UNDP's impact at the country level which would enable it to carry them out, for while most environmental problems had a global dimension, solutions were invariably to be found at the national level. The role UNDP had played in linking environment and development at the national level in preparations leading up to the Conference had been one of the reasons why it had received the Earth Prize in December 1992.

9. The fourth reason why UNDP was special was its key leadership role in the management of technical cooperation. The promotion of national execution, the successor support cost arrangements and the programme approach were closely interrelated and constituted a revolution in the way UNDP did business. The specialized agencies, with their breadth of experience and knowledge, would continue to remain indispensable partners. National execution had increased from just over 4 per cent of programme delivery in 1985 to more than 23 per cent in 1992. Almost 40 per cent of projects approved so far for the fifth cycle would be executed by developing country Governments. The trend was towards a more focused and effective multisectoral approach in support of national goals.

10. The fifth and final reason was that UNDP had made great progress in its own managerial efficiency, based on a pro-active human resources strategy, strict budget management and a decentralized approach which relied on managerial

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initiative and accountability. A number of changes had been instituted in recent years, including a highly competitive programme to recruit and train young professionals to be the next generation of leaders in UNDP, management and other specialized training for all professional staff, a new performance appraisal system and reassignment policy which encouraged transparency and interaction between managers and staff, special professional counselling at headquarters for those with personal problems which affected their performance, and a new total quality programme, which was already yielding tangible results after only 18 months of operation.

11. In the interest of preserving funds for UNDP's programme, drastic measures had been taken to reduce administrative expenditure, with headquarters posts being cut by 15 per cent in the 1992-1993 budget and proposed cuts of some $42 million for the next biennium. The core budget for 1994-1995, which was being submitted to the Governing Council at its current session, was in fact lower than the original budget for 1992-1993 submitted in 1991. It was his belief that those cost-saving measures were without precedent in the United Nations system, and he was pleased to see that that had been recognized by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. Measures had also been taken to strengthen accountability, with the introduction in 1990 of the concept of the operations manager in the field, and two new proposals in the forthcoming budget aimed at further increasing cost-effectiveness and accountability, namely the creation of an Office of Budget and Management and the establishment of regional service centres.

12. He believed that in all those areas UNDP had earned the trust of the Governing Council. Its record at the country level should engender confidence and pride, although it was fallible and had made mistakes. It continued to face the dilemma that its strengths were not always immediately visible. It was difficult to support national capacity-building, with its emphasis on national commitment and ownership, and at the same time secure headlines which drew attention to its particular role. UNDP's great strength was its ability to respond to changing needs and priorities in developing countries, indeed to changing concepts of development itself. But that was seen by some as lack of direction or as lack of a clear sense of purpose. UNDP's mandate was broad-based and complex, and to some extent in constant evolution, but it was proud to be the trusted partner of 174 Governments.

13. He thanked all members of the Governing Council, and in particular the major donors, for their long-standing and continued strong support. UNDP remained fully committed to the reform initiatives currently under way, notably the Nordic initiative on governance and financing. It was absolutely essential that formal agreement be reached urgently on that entire reform package. A related question was that of the role of the resident coordinator, for the management of which system UNDP had been recognized by the General Assembly, in its resolution 47/119, as remaining the best vehicle. Strengthening that system was the most cost-effective option for Member States, and to that end UNDP was committed to following through on widening the selection pool. He had already made proposals in that connection to increase the transparency of the process, such as informing partners in the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) of all resident representative vacancies, giving careful consideration to all candidates and reporting back, and to extending the UNDP Management Training

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Programme for new recruits into a joint entry level programme for all JCGP partners.

14. He would like to conclude his term of office with three parting thoughts. Firstly, UNDP must never lose the support it received from developing countries, which derived from its multinational composition, its global presence and the sense of ownership by developing countries that came from full participation in governance. To lose that support would be to risk UNDP's identity and perhaps its very reason for being. It was above all an instrument of global cooperation, and in everything it did it must seek common ground. UNDP must be ever wary of becoming blindly donor-driven, important though those donations of course were.

15. Secondly, UNDP must focus more on sub-Saharan Africa, which was in many respects falling behind the rest of the world. UNDP had and would maintain a special commitment to Africa, which received about half of its total core resources, but it had to be wary of applying set old formulas which in many instances had proved not to work. The challenge of Africa was primarily one of vision, and for that the Africans themselves had to set a new course. But in making that vision real, the world community must stand ready to help, and UNDP must lead the way.

16. Lastly, development was about people, and the desire to make their lives better. It was essential to remain vigilant against protectionist tendencies which stifled human initiative, whether resulting from the self-serving interests of national Governments or from the deadening inertia which was always a threat to international bureaucracies such as UNDP's.

17. Mankind had to ask itself what it was willing to risk in order to achieve the ideal inscribed in the United Nations Charter that peace, democracy and development were one, and what it risked if it allowed that ideal to slip away. As Governments faced important decisions on the future of multilateral development cooperation, the functions UNDP carried out, by necessity, must continue. The idealism and the system through which so much had been achieved could not be abandoned; efforts should be redoubled to improve and strengthen those elements of that system which appeared to work. Change must be sought, not for its own sake but in the genuine belief that improvements could be made.

18. After seven years as Administrator of UNDP, he remained convinced of its vitality, its ability to innovate and to evolve, and its enormous importance in facing the complex challenges that lay ahead. In taking his leave of UNDP at the current session of the Governing Council, he wished to thank everyone for the generosity they had shown in supporting him, and especially his staff, in whatever part of the world they served, for their dedication and hard work in making UNDP such a marvellous organization.

The meeting was suspended at 11 a.m. and resumed at 11.20 a.m.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(c) ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (continued) (DP/1993/19)

19. Mr. TENNE (Observer for Israel) said that the political repercussions in the Middle East resulting from the Gulf war and its aftermath had had an adverse impact on the Administered Territories, as elsewhere in the region. In order to offset the negative economic effects of that situation and the continuing intifadah violence, Israel had recently introduced a series of economic measures, which were outlined in document A/48/112. His Government's priorities for stimulating local enterprise through human resources development, increased employment and expanded infrastructures were in keeping with UNDP goals and were also consistent with the recommendations made in the report of the Mission for the review of UNDP's programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Israeli authorities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza had found the report to be concise and highly professional and he commended the team and the UNDP representatives for their dedicated efforts.

20. Against that background, it was somewhat puzzling to note the reference made at the 12th meeting by the Director of the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People in introducing document DP/1992/19 to the "absence of a host Government in the territories". In point of fact, the Government of Israel was the host Government and the operations of UNDP in the Territories were predicated on that incontrovertible fact.

21. Israel would continue its forward-looking strategy, as always in cooperation with UNDP projects in order to help the local population achieve the desired progress. The key to success in that common endeavour lay in resisting pressure to politicize the Programme's positive approach and in strengthening the fruitful working relationship between UNDP staff, experts and professionals and the competent Israeli authorities in the Administered Territories.

22. Mr. HORIGUCHI (Japan) said that his delegation attached great importance to the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People and had actively supported it in view of the urgent need for such assistance and in order to promote peace in the region. His Government was considering making a contribution of $2.5 million in 1993 to the UNDP Japan-Palestine Development Fund, established in 1988 to promote the economic and social development of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and help create a peaceful environment in the region. In the light of those urgent humanitarian needs, the Government of Japan had pledged up to $3 million for emergency aid to the West Bank and Gaza Strip at the Tokyo Working Group Meeting on Environment on 24 May. He hoped that the projects supported by the Development Fund would be implemented speedily and effectively, with the cooperation of UNDP. Lastly, he stressed that the Programme should take a leading role in facilitating aid coordination, encouraging dialogue and facilitating the exchange of information among donors.

23. Mr. BORJA DE MONZOTA (France) said that the priority sectors for new projects had been well chosen and that everything depended on the content of the programmes proposed. It was urgently necessary to cope with the difficulties resulting from the closing of the occupied territories, which would reduce available financial resources for the population concerned, to deal with the financial crisis of the private Palestinian institutions that had assumed much of the work in the field of education and health and to set up a personnel

(Mr. Borja de Monzota, France)

training plan in view of the multiple programmes proposed and the need to coordinate them. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the Programme's laudable efforts to promote coordination and greater mutual understanding of the programmes financed by the donors.

24. Mr. GUO Xianzhi (China) noted with satisfaction that in 1992 the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People had achieved a level of activity unmatched in its 12-year history. China appreciated the efforts made in the past two years by UNDP and all sides concerned and supported the provision of technical assistance to the Palestinian people. It was to be hoped that in the planning of assistance programmes and activities in the future there would be full consultation with all sides under the short-term assistance programmes to create employment opportunities for the Palestinian people and improve their living standards.

25. Ms. KIMBLE (United States of America) said that her delegation supported in particular the new priorities identified for the new activities outlined in document DP/1993/19 and also endorsed the recommendations resulting from the review of the Programme in 1992. Those recommendations should be incorporated into the new programming and operational initiatives under way. Her Government welcomed such initiatives, particularly those on behalf of Palestinian women, and the Programme's effective collaboration with non-governmental organizations.

26. Ms. WYRSCH (Observer for Switzerland) said that her delegation fully supported the Programme's activities and new priorities, particularly with regard to the environment and creation of productive employment. It was very useful to have UNDP as a participant in the Multilateral Negotiation Group and she hoped that it would continue to play a major role in that connection.

27. Mr. ROTHERMEL (Director, Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, UNDP), replying to comments made by delegations, said that the length of the report in document DP/1993/19 was in keeping with the relevant guidelines laid down by the Governing Council. He expressed appreciation to those speakers who had drawn attention to the crucial importance of employment at the current time and the critical situation facing the population in the Gaza Strip.

(a) ROLE OF UNDP IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS NEW AGENDA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA IN THE 1990S (DP/1993/17)

28. Mrs. JOHNSON-SIRLEAF (Assistant Administrator, Regional Director for Africa), introducing the sub-item and the report of the Administrator (DP/1993/17), said that the expected peace dividend resulting from the end of the cold war had not materialized for Africa. To make matters worse, economic difficulties in some donor countries had led to drastic cuts or little or no growth in development assistance. Furthermore, as the competition for development assistance intensified, the very concept of development was expanding. Tremendous social, political and economic changes were taking place in most sub-Saharan African countries as a result of economic and political reforms. Economic reforms were necessary to consolidate gains in production and growth, ensure broader participation in economic activity and reduce population growth. While insufficient in itself, economic growth remained an essential condition for sustainable development.

(Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf)

29. Experience showed that elements of economic reform, such as price and interest-rate liberalization, exchange-rate adjustment and civil service reforms, could also represent a source of instability with regard to the potential for private investment and entrepreneurship. Accordingly, even in the relatively more successful adjusting countries, private capital inflows had virtually dried up and private investment was slow in coming. There was a need therefore to ensure the continuation of the reform process by reducing the external debt burden and increasing resource flows.

30. The donor community must support the progress made by African countries towards achieving sustainable development. There must be a commitment by the African countries themselves to sustain the reform efforts, further mobilize their human and financial resources, improve resource allocation and utilization and increase political participation by the people. The international community, for its part, must provide sustained support for African development. The linkage between debt forgiveness and flows and the need for concerted action in both areas had become both an economic and a moral imperative.

31. There must be a greater effort to build the human and institutional capacities of Africa and set up adequate infrastructures to prepare Africa for global competition. It was gratifying to note that in the area of political reforms, significant progress had been made in such countries as Benin, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Zambia. The need for improved governance in all aspects was today widely accepted in sub-Saharan Africa. UNDP had assisted more than 12 of the countries that had taken the first step towards political pluralism in effecting political transitions despite difficult situations and unanticipated results. In some countries, however, the demand for political change and respect for human rights had resulted in internal conflict and unrest, undermining normal UNDP programme activities. If unaddressed, those situations would require a much higher level of resources at a later stage. In addition to the structural problems of underdevelopment, there was the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which might well become the number one obstacle to growth. UNDP continued to increase assistance programmes to the countries that were affected.

32. In Africa, UNDP would increasingly be called upon to address the wider concept of development to help African countries set up programmes embracing such areas as economic growth, human development, governance, environmental protection and economic management capacity. The Programme, with its broad mandate, field presence and orientation, was the best institution to assist African countries and their partners in dealing with those issues. The Bureau for Africa itself would have to develop the requisite capacity to address those different situations and help countries elaborate long-term development strategies to take account of the broader development concepts.

33. In view of the increasingly differentiated development needs, UNDP would have to develop quick, pragmatic and flexible response interventions. The challenge of capacity-building was different and more urgent. Weaknesses in the institutional resource base of African countries remained largely unaddressed. Africa's big challenge was to use its trained human resources to develop sustainable institutions.

(Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf)

34. Even more than before, UNDP would require the full support of all members to discharge those enlarged responsibilities. For African leaders, UNDP was an important alternative voice in the development of policy options, an institution for sharing the experiences of a vast field network system and a supportive partner for Africa's national ownership and empowerment. Nevertheless, there was a contradiction between the felt need for UNDP and its dwindling means to respond. Although appropriate adjustments were being made to take account of changed conditions, no institution could sustain the precipitous decline in resources under the current cycle without an adverse impact on the content and quality of its programme delivery.

35. With regard to UNDP responses to the development needs of Africa, new concepts had recently been introduced, such as the programme approach, national execution and new agency support costs. The emerging situation in Africa might require a revolutionary response: bold experimentation and responses to political transition which went beyond electoral assistance, quick responses to emergency situations, greater programme flexibility, holistic approaches to development, better delivery modalities and greater and more decentralized capacities.

36. In order to meet those new challenges, the Regional Bureau for Africa was seeking to enhance its own internal human and institutional capacity through skills upgrading, headquarters restructuring and the decentralization and strengthening of field offices. Specialized training was being offered to headquarters staff through workshops in such areas as poverty alleviation, resource mobilization, environment and sustainable development. The Bureau was also continuing to hold regular forums and policy discussions, in keeping with the objective of developing a niche for UNDP in the international intellectual dialogue.

37. Headquarters restructuring was being undertaken partly to improve the Bureau's internal capacity and partly in response to cuts in the administrative budget. While, overall, the headquarters staff had been reduced from 72 to 62, she believed that the structure and capacity for effective backstopping of field offices had been retained.

38. On the question of decentralization of field offices and strengthening of their capacity for policy dialogue, economic management and aid coordination, UNDP had accepted the recommendations made following a recent evaluation of the Economist programme launched by her predecessor in 1986. Consistent with those recommendations, the Regional Bureau wished to propose an increase in the number of Economist posts from the current level of 25 to 40. If the proposal was acceptable to the Council in principle, its budgetary implications would be presented at a later stage. The same training offered at headquarters would also be introduced at field offices, where appropriate. The Bureau was also taking steps to ensure that all financial rules and regulations were strictly observed, by encouraging regular interaction between division chiefs and programme managers at headquarters on the one hand and resident representatives on the other. Electronic communication facilities between field offices and headquarters were also being upgraded. The Bureau proposed to continue along those lines despite the cuts in its administrative budget, which would lead to the elimination of 50 international posts by the end of 1993. As far as

(Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf)

possible, it would attempt to maintain capacity by replacing international staff with equally competent national staff.

39. The sharp fall in programme resources required an aggressive approach to resource mobilization. The decline in contributions had had an especially severe impact on the Bureau's regional programme, with grave implications for regional partners such as the Economic Commission for Africa. In response to that situation, the Bureau was eliminating low-impact programmes, ensuring greater programme concentration and resource mobilization and developing strategies that would attract additional resources from donor countries. Resident representatives were designing specific resource mobilization strategies at the country level and, together with recipient Governments, were expanding their contacts with donor representatives.

40. With regard to programme interventions, the overarching goal of UNDP in Africa was to help countries identify their long-term development goals and strategies and acquire the necessary capacity to achieve them.

41. At the level of strategy development, national policy and high-level capacity-building, UNDP-supported programmes, especially the National Long-Term Perspective Studies and the African capacity-building initiative, were particularly relevant. After initial teething problems, both of those programmes had become operational in late 1992.

42. In addition to its regional and national programmes, UNDP was supporting the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (NADAF) by serving on the panel of high-level personalities on African development which was advising the Secretary-General on the implementation of the New Agenda.

43. In the area of humanitarian assistance, UNDP was working with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola, Liberia and Mozambique in delivering humanitarian assistance. During the drought in southern Africa, UNDP had successfully supported the 10 affected countries, thereby averting what might have been a tragic human situation.

44. Most UNDP activities were at the country level and some had been very successful. For example, through a programme to promote the creation and development of small- and medium-sized enterprises of high technological potential in Zimbabwe, Ghana and Nigeria, small-scale informal producers were now producing ceramics and other products on a commercial scale.

45. Within the parameters and constraints of UNDP personnel and administrative policies she was committed to full transparency and accountability and had informed all managers both at headquarters and in the field that no one who performed below acceptable standards or failed adequately to upgrade his or her skills would be shielded. In the changing situation in Africa, there were no panaceas or quick fixes. What was needed was a long-range framework and an increased capacity to respond effectively and rapidly to Africa's own efforts. She wished to conclude by expressing her appreciation to the outgoing Administrator, Mr. William H. Draper III, for the support which he had given to the Regional Bureau for Africa in particular and to the cause of African development in general.

46. Mr. MARKER (Observer for Denmark), speaking on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community, said that during the discussion of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, agreement had been reached between African countries and their development partners that human development should be a central element of the strategy for the Agenda and that economic growth was a prerequisite for human development. It had also been pointed out that in order to make development sustainable, economic growth should give priority attention to human development.

47. UNDP was expected to play an active role in the implementation of the New Agenda and the Twelve therefore welcomed the Administrator's report which provided valuable information on the role of UNDP in advancing and implementing the Agenda.

48. Africa's development was primarily the responsibility of Africans. The fact that the international community had accepted the principle of shared responsibility and full partnership with Africa, and had accordingly committed itself to giving full and tangible support to the efforts of African countries, was equally important however. The international community should vigorously pursue its efforts to build that partnership and discharge its commitment.

49. The previous week, the ministers of development of the European Community (EC) had agreed on a special initiative for Africa which underscored the importance of establishing and maintaining stability and security in the countries concerned. The ministers had agreed to allocate approximately US$ 120 million for that purpose immediately, since they considered it of the utmost importance to move from emergency to rehabilitation assistance as early as possible in 1993, given the magnitude of the rehabilitation needs of many developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In that connection, the Commission of the European Communities had been asked to make an urgent evaluation of the resources needed and to design fast-track rehabilitation programmes. The ministers had also emphasized that such assistance should be coordinated fully with United Nations agencies and other donors and should be implemented, where appropriate, in close cooperation with non-governmental organizations.

50. UNDP could utilize its comparative advantages in several developing countries which were suffering from the consequences of man-made or natural disasters, by bridging the gap between emergency assistance on the one hand and rehabilitation and long-term sustainable development on the other. That was particularly true of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Towards that end, UNDP was strengthening the capacity of national administrations, institutions and local non-governmental organizations by promoting the African Capacity-Building Initiative, which was jointly sponsored by a number of donors. UNDP participation in building an enabling environment for sustainable development, by providing technical assistance for the different aspects of the democratization process was equally important. In that way, UNDP was building capacity in one of the most vital areas that facilitated sustainable human development.

51. The Twelve regarded partnership and shared responsibility as key elements in the implementation of the New Agenda. The initiative taken by the EC ministers of development was evidence of their commitment.

52. Mr. KPAKPO (Benin) said that the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s had yet to fulfil the expectations which it had aroused on the African continent. The targets set for 1992 had not been met owing to the failure of African Governments and the international community to take the necessary action. The activities of the Coordinator of Assistance to LDCs in the Regional Bureau for Africa in implementing the Agenda had been hampered by lack of human and material resources, with the result that most of the African countries had failed to achieve the minimum target of 6 per cent annual growth in GNP set in the Agenda.

53. While their countries were reeling from the effects of natural disasters and disease was ravaging their populations, African Governments had had to spend US$ 26 billion in 1992 on servicing a debt of over US$ 280 billion. Such a massive transfer of resources from South to North meant that neither Official Development Assistance nor net inflows of external resources to the African countries had increased in real terms for years.

54. The lack of commitment displayed by the donor community during the negotiations on the New Agenda seemed to have persisted, for no specific action seemed to have been taken, within the framework of bilateral cooperation, to implement the Agenda. In those circumstances, it was hardly surprising that more than half of all LDCs were in Africa. If nothing was done to halt the trend of declining commodity prices, virtually all the countries of Africa, would soon be LDCs.

55. He wished to thank UNDP and all the other agencies of the United Nations system for the efforts they were making on behalf of the African countries and the LDCs despite the magnitude of the problems they faced and the paucity of financial resources. He also welcomed the generous decision by the Government of Japan to organize a conference in October 1993 at Tokyo to examine, with the African countries, the United Nations system and other donors, more effective ways of rendering assistance to the countries of Africa. That decision was a hopeful sign and would encourage African countries to intensify their efforts to overcome their problems.

56. Benin had chosen the round-table approach for coordinating the activities of donors and of its Government. The second round-table conference had been held at Geneva in 1992 with the assistance of UNDP, and it had been decided to continue the process by holding six sectoral consultations during 1993. The preparation of the fifth country programme for Benin, which had just been adopted by the Council, had benefited from that process and from the sectoral consultations. For the implementation of that programme, Benin favoured the programme approach, since it facilitated the coherent, integrated execution of development projects.

57. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the programme approach, however, the implementation of the fifth country programme for Benin would require national technical and administrative capacity-building through personnel training and skills upgrading in the areas of project identification, follow-up and evaluation.

58. Technical cooperation played a decisive role in the economic and social development process of recipient countries. The Government of Benin was convinced of the value of such cooperation and had participated in the NATCAP

(Mr. Kpakpo, Benin)

process in order to gain a better understanding of the various components of technical cooperation. As part of the restructuring of its ministries, it had also decided to establish a programming and coordination unit, which would work directly with the NATCAP unit in the Ministry of Planning and Economic Restructuring.

59. His Government appreciated UNDP initiatives and actions aimed at national capacity-building in order to help countries become more self-reliant in all areas of development management and thereby achieve the objectives of the New Agenda for African Development in the 1990s. It also welcomed UNDP efforts to establish various mechanisms for economic management and aid coordination for LDCs and to help meet the targets set in the United Nations Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries, which he hoped donor countries would support more generously than they had in the past.

60. Mr. HORIGUCHI (Japan) said that one of the most important goals of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (NADAF) was the achievement of an average annual growth rate for real gross national product of at least 6 per cent during the decade. In his delegation's view, the most pressing task for African countries was to build up their capacity for implementing and managing macroeconomic policies. That was why his country supported the approach taken by UNDP in targeting the capacity-building efforts of African countries, under programmes such as the Management Development Programme (MDP) and the African Capacity-Building Initiative (ACBI). UNDP should play a catalytic and coordinating role in that area by working with donor countries, other United Nations agencies and multilateral institutions.

61. His Government, with the co-sponsorship of the United Nations and the Global Coalition for Africa and the assistance of UNDP, would convene the Tokyo Conference on African Development on 5 and 6 October 1993. The Conference was intended to confirm the importance of African development, enhance world-wide awareness of the need to assist African countries and discuss the basis for development cooperation in Africa.

62. Mr. BORJA DE MONZOTA (France) said that his delegation resolutely supported all the actions and programmes for Africa carried out by UNDP in partnership with African countries, as well as the priority given to Africa. France would ensure that such priority continued to be respected in terms of both the geographical distribution of UNDP programmes and the distribution of UNDP resources. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the convergence of approaches between UNDP and the United Nations Secretariat in the framework of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (NADAF) and reiterated its full adherence to the guidelines contained in the Agenda.

63. Mr. SJÖGREN (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that UNDP activities in Africa should be constructed around human development and should focus on national capacity-building. Human development activities were clearly an effective bridge between several interrelated aspects of development. Further development of its already considerable skills in the areas of human development and capacity-building would also help UNDP fulfil its coordinating role.

(Mr. Sjögren, Sweden)

64. The National Long-Term Perspective Studies (NLTPS) should contribute to the much-needed holistic, coordinated approach to development in the least developed countries (LDCs). Further efforts should be made to introduce NLTPS into more countries as soon as possible and the Secretariat could perhaps explain how it intended to increase the number of such studies. The Nordic countries would also appreciate more information from the Secretariat on the experience gained so far in the establishment of NLTPS.

65. The Nordic countries were concerned that the large number of regional economic integration projects being promoted by UNDP in the African region, in addition to regional programmes in general, would spread already scarce resources too thin for them to be effective. Tighter priorities needed to be set for activities in African LDCs for the remaining years of the fifth cycle.

66. The Nordic countries believed that UNDP had an important role to play under NADAF and had therefore decided to complement their considerable bilateral support to African countries with equally considerable support to UNDP. In order for UNDP to play its catalytic and coordinating role in Africa, its field offices needed to be strengthened, especially in the economic and environmental areas by integrating those aspects into all programmes. Lastly, UNDP must use the full potential of round tables, while also participating in other multilateral meetings on the economic and financial development of African countries.

67. Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation fully endorsed the market-oriented economic reform strategies being pursued in an increasing number of African countries. There was growing evidence that adherence to structural adjustment, in partnership with the donor community led by the World Bank and IMF, was leading to improved economic performance.

68. With respect to document DP/1993/17, it was important that developing countries' interest in regional cooperation should not distract them from reforming and liberalizing their economies. Unfortunately, regional integration could and did lead to inefficiency and uncompetitiveness, and developing countries which were growing rapidly tended to target world markets rather than primarily regional ones. His delegation welcomed the emphasis on investment promotion and private sector development, which could best be achieved by providing an enabling environment for the private sector. While his delegation strongly welcomed the commitment to the democratization process, it stressed the importance of governance with open political systems that gave primacy to the rule of law.

69. While food security was important, it was not synonymous with food self-sufficiency. The pursuance of food security beyond comparative advantage tended to divert resources away from more productive activities. UNDP needed to focus on ensuring access to food rather than merely increasing its supply.

70. Although his delegation agreed fully with the views of the Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa on the AIDS pandemic, it felt that UNDP work on HIV/AIDS in Africa should remain squarely within its areas of competence, in order to avoid continuing rivalry among United Nations agencies which could inhibit the international community's efforts in that area.

(Mr. Machin, United Kingdom)

71. He commended the structural and staffing changes in the Regional Bureau, which were consonant with the difficult decisions that the Administrator was taking throughout UNDP.

72. It was generally agreed that the delivery of technical assistance needed to be rethought in order to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. In that connection, his delegation was gratified that UNDP, the World Bank and bilateral donors would be meeting in early 1994 to re-examine the whole question of technical assistance delivery.

73. Ms. WYRSCH (Switzerland) said that UNDP was playing an increasingly fundamental role in Africa. One of its strengths was its solid partnership ties with African Governments which had led to the development of a long-term vision for African development and the establishment of structures which would allow such development to remain flexible and viable while permitting the effective participation of the entire population. The vision of the division of labour with international financial institutions was very interesting and it would be in everyone's interest if the current session could come up with a more effective division of labour. Her delegation supported the UNDP approach to the difficult problem of AIDS, which could seriously jeopardize all the progress made thus far in Africa.

74. Her delegation welcomed the novel idea of putting more UNDP economists in the field. It would like to know more about what such economists did and wondered whether a copy of the evaluation report could be made available to it. She agreed with the United Kingdom delegation that UNDP rationalize its work: the time had perhaps come to review all the tasks assigned to UNDP to see whether they were actually necessary.

75. Mr. GUO Xianzhi (China) said that despite the high price that African countries had paid in recent years for restructuring measures aimed at improving their development, they were still facing enormous difficulties in the area of economic and social development. His delegation was grateful to UNDP and the international community for the positive support they had given to the African region in connection with its economic and social development and the improvement of its environment.

76. Mr. JANHA (Gambia) said that it was disheartening to note that Africa's development was being very seriously affected by its ever-growing debt, which now amounted to 106 per cent of its gross domestic product. The situation had been further exacerbated by declining investment flows, dwindling earnings and imbalances in international trade. An appropriate strategy must be developed to ensure the coordinated, sustained development of Africa. In that connection, the role of UNDP in promoting the continent's development should be encouraged by increasing the quality and quantity of assistance to Africa and strengthening the Regional Bureau. Any decrease in UNDP development assistance to the region, especially at the current critical stage in its development, could adversely affect the sustainability of very useful programmes initiated by UNDP in such vital areas as capacity-building and poverty alleviation.

77. Mrs. VASISHT (India) said that her delegation supported all international efforts aimed at the development of Africa and saw the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s as a vital component of programmes in that

(Mrs. Vasisht, India)

regard. However, it must be emphasized that the role envisaged for UNDP was one of promoting self-sufficiency in Africa. The African countries were bursting with talent that only needed a push in the right direction and temporary financial support to succeed. Africa had its own agenda for development and no collective outside international agenda should be imposed on the region.

78. Although her delegation had been absent during the discussion of the special programme of assistance to the Palestinian people, it wished to express full support for it.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 3 June 1993, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. ZIARAN (Islamic Republic of Iran)
(Vice-President)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(a) ROLE OF UNDP IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS NEW AGENDA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA IN THE 1990s (continued) (DP/1993/17)

1. Mr. GATHUNGU (Observer for Kenya) acknowledged the efforts undertaken by UNDP, through the donor community, to confront the many problems facing the African countries and to help bring about political change.

2. As stated in the report of the Administrator (DP/1993/17), economic performance in Africa had been poor. He thanked the Secretary-General for his efforts to underscore the importance of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa (NADAF), and UNDP for its work in the area of National Long-Term Perspective Studies (NLTPS) and the African Capacity-Building Initiative (ACBI). His delegation agreed with the representative of India that the most ultimate goal of cooperation between the international community and the African countries should be to give African people the ability to solve their own problems; it also agreed with the representative of Switzerland that data collection should be done in the countries themselves.

3. Mr. DODSON (United States) said his delegation commended UNDP's emphasis on institution building and African participation in the design and implementation of development programmes and applauded its work to foster democratization. Given the limited financial and management resources his delegation hoped that UNDP would focus on a few priorities at the country level in order to achieve the greatest amount of impact. Those priorities should be based on local circumstances, local commitment and donor coordination. UNDP should begin modestly, initiating perspective studies only in those countries where local commitment was high and the prospects for success were greatest.

4. Mr. LAOUARI (Algeria) said that African countries needed the dynamic support of the international community and United Nations organizations if they were to succeed in implementing new strategies and policies to improve their economies. National capacity had to be increased in order to help countries become more autonomous in development management. Support of economic reforms and structural adjustment programmes and implementation of specific measures to alleviate social costs were a priority concern.

5. The cooperation of the developed countries and United Nations organizations was needed to combat drought and desertification in Africa. His delegation urged UNDP to provide technical support to the process of drafting a future United Nations convention in that area.

6. Activities to combat and contain the AIDS epidemic were crucial to promoting human development, however, they should not overshadow the need to reinforce similar programmes to combat other equally devastating epidemics.

(Mr. Laouari, Algeria)

7. It was hoped that the restructuring of the UNDP secretariat and the ensuing staff reductions would not negatively affect programme implementation. Current UNDP programmes in Africa should benefit from past experience so that they would better identify bottlenecks and shortages in implementing projects and ensure effective application of the New Agenda.

8. His delegation supported UNDP development activities in least developed countries and the programme of assistance to the Palestinian people and hoped that the latter would not be hindered as a result of the political situation in that region.

9. Ms. KNUTSON (Canada) said that her Government welcomed UNDP's support for good governance and democratization as well as its support for regional integration in Africa. While competing in global markets was a worthy goal, the collaborative measures that bound countries in a region needed to be expanded.

10. Mr. DJUMALA (Indonesia) said that his delegation supported UNDP assistance for Africa and saw encouraging progress in the NADAF programme. The continuing critical economic situation in Africa was attributable to factors such as the crippling debt burden, depressed commodity prices and inadequate financial resources for economic growth, as well as natural disasters such as drought and desertification. It was therefore essential that UNDP give assistance in human resources development as well as technological know-how.

11. Mr. MWAUNGULU (Observer for Malawi) said that his Government strongly supported UNDP resource mobilization efforts. The precipitous decline in UNDP resources and the projected 25 per cent cut in the funding of country programmes, were of particular concern. Phased implementation of country programmes would be preferable to reductions in programme contents.

12. At the field level, his Government urged UNDP to make even more determined efforts to recruit qualified local consultants and conduct more focused and skilled development training. The United Nations system and the donor community had provided active technical cooperation for democratic reforms in his country.

13. Mr. KONAN (Côte d'Ivoire) said that UNDP's support for NADAF was crucial. NADAF brought together the commitments of African countries and those of the developed countries to work together for success. UNDP was already actively engaged in implementing the objectives identified by the African countries themselves concerning, in particular, the improvement of their economies, the strengthening of capacities, rational management of the environment and regional integration, including support for the democratic process. That support was provided within the framework of the regular IPF programme. It was hoped that further assistance would be provided by the developed countries, either bilaterally or multilaterally. Areas of support included the reduction of debt increase of resource flows, increase of investment and improvement of markets and prices for the main export commodities. In addition to providing humanitarian assistance and meeting immediate needs, it was necessary to lay the foundations for a long-term and more dynamic strategy for Africa.

(Mr. Konan, Côte d'Ivoire)

14. The International Conference on African Development would provide an opportunity to specify needs and encourage more sustained and productive cooperation.

15. Mr. MOHAMED (Sudan) said that the Administrator had noted in his statement that there were hundreds of thousands of hungry and sick people and refugees in Africa; yet, Africa had enormous natural resources and reserves of water and arable land that made it a very important continent in the modern world. His delegation had participated in field visits to two African countries with members of the Council. It could be seen in any African country that there were immense mineral, water and agricultural resources that were undeveloped. If those resources were properly used, thousands of people could be fed. The Sudan had four different climates; it had vast areas of arable land, only a small part of which had been cultivated; there were 10 major rivers and other water resources.

16. UNDP had an important role to play in the development of the African continent. His delegation supported NADAF and welcomed the steps that were being taken to develop Africa's resources and help the continent become independent and self-sufficient.

17. Mr. AFONSO (Observer for Angola) said that his delegation encouraged UNDP in its efforts to strengthen the capacities of African countries and hoped that it would redouble its efforts to develop human resources and promote the democratization of African countries and regional integration so as to facilitate the development of Africa as a whole.

18. In September 1992, the first free and fair elections have been held in Angola; they have been made possible through assistance from UNDP and other donors. It was hoped that in the new era of peace, the second phase of elections would be carried out, with the support of UNDP, so that Angola would be a democratic country.

19. Mrs. JOHNSON SIRLEAF (Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Africa) noted with appreciation that several delegations had endorsed the Bureau's idea of the principle of shared responsibility; she also noted the suggestions made by many delegations concerning support for Africa through a sustained level of resources, and expressed particular appreciation for the commitment made by the European Community for an ECU 100 million facility to support Africa.

20. Capacity-building was a key component of UNDP's work; she had taken note of the suggestions made by delegations regarding the National Long-term Perspective Studies (NLTPS); the experience and status to date were outlined in paragraphs 7 to 8 of document DP/1993/17. The purpose of NLTPS was to reinforce other activities in capacity-building. She noted the comments made by the United States delegation regarding the need to focus on a few countries and to try to achieve quick results that could then be replicated.

21. She also noted the suggestions made by the United Kingdom and the European Community regarding the need to reinforce the progress that had been made in many countries as they moved towards market-oriented systems; the suggestion regarding food security would be discussed with the African countries concerned.

(Mrs. Johnson Sirleaf)

22. She was pleased that many delegations had endorsed the Bureau's focus on HIV/AIDS and said that it would be trying to raise the levels of consciousness and of support for programmes to address that truly serious problem for African development.

23. She welcomed the support expressed for the Bureau's restructuring efforts and staffing arrangements. In response to the representative of Sweden, she noted that economics and the environment were both issues that were increasingly being integrated into UNDP's design and implementation of programmes.

24. In response to the comment made by the representative of Switzerland on the issue of data collection, she noted that UNDP carried out data collection for the development cooperation report, which was a vital management tool for Governments and the international community. In order to ease the burden on local embassies and representation, the Bureau was seeking ways of streamlining the process, in close cooperation with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and through NATCAP processes.

25. She welcomed participation by Council members in field visits and encouraged them to continue that activity since it was the only way the Bureau could demonstrate its success and identify new approaches.

(b) MATTERS RELATING TO THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (DP/1993/18)

26. Mr. LOUP (Coordinator of Assistance to the Least Developed Countries), introducing the report on the least developed countries (DP/1993/18), said that instead of trying to cover all UNDP activities in such countries, the report sought to present two particular priority aspects in more detail: aid coordination and economic management, and human development.

27. The figures given in the report made it clear that UNDP's core resources had been increasingly concentrated on the least developed countries. Over the last 20 years, the share of the IPF going to such countries had almost doubled. At the same time, the resources of the Special Measures Fund for the Least Developed Countries had virtually dried up, although the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries and the Council itself had underlined the importance of the Fund.

28. The report described UNDP's activities to strengthen the capacity of such countries in the area of aid coordination and economic management, including round tables and NATCAPs. Steps had been taken to streamline the methodologies of the round tables and NATCAPs, and the main challenge now was to integrate the two instruments, as well as other UNDP activities in that area in a comprehensive approach. Round tables and NATCAPs were still seen by many field offices as isolated instruments rather than integral parts of a coherent approach.

29. Human development was a major priority in those countries, given the particular state of deprivation of their population. The presentation in the report had been limited to two particular aspects: UNDP's cooperation with non-governmental organizations and its activities in favour of women in development. The report made it clear that different approaches had been tried in an effort to tailor the activities to the needs of the populations.

30. Mr. KONG Fannong (Director, Technical Cooperation Policy Division, Department of Development Support and Management Services) said that the new Department of Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS) had been actively engaged in a wide range of activities and, by the end of 1992, the activities had been extended to all least developed countries. Since 1990, increasing emphasis had been placed on strengthening the coordinating machinery of Governments in their efforts to implement the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. In 1992, the Department's technical cooperation activities in the least developed countries had reached a record high of 483 projects, with a total expenditure of $59 million. The Department had been able to respond to a large number of requests from such countries for numerous advisory and other technical missions. It had also reinforced its efforts in promoting and encouraging pre-investment, thereby raising the overall level of investment from both foreign and domestic sources. Attention had been directed to the need to strengthen managerial capabilities required to rationalize the use of national resources, particularly in the Department's programme in development administration.

31. In the public administration sector, the Department had undertaken a number of fact-finding missions to assess the capability of Governments in organizing elections and to provide advice. Those missions had resulted in the formulation and execution of technical cooperation programmes in seven countries to strengthen the capacity of national electoral commissions, organize international observer missions and provide assistance in the various aspects of the organization and conduct of national elections. Another major activity of the Department was enhancing the financial management capabilities of the least developed countries; recently, with extensive bilateral support, the Department had initiated an important project to harmonize and simplify the accountability requirement which donors placed on host countries.

32. In the sector of development planning and policy, 38 per cent of the interregional advisory and other technical missions had been undertaken for the least developed countries. In addition, 26 such countries in Africa had benefited from the Department's technical assistance projects in the broad areas of development planning, macroeconomic management and monitoring and subnational planning, and others outside Africa had also received assistance.

33. Activities in the development of natural resources and energy had concentrated on resource planning and management and on the strengthening of national capabilities to identify, develop and manage natural resources as a primary component of economic and social progress, taking into account the need for the sustainable utilization of resources, with particular emphasis on the promotion and application of new technologies for resource conservation. Technical cooperation activities in the minerals sector had concentrated primarily on strengthening institutions and human resources with a view to developing mineral resources for increasing foreign earnings and fostering industrial and technological development.

34. The Department also recognized the need to incorporate the concerns and experience of women in the development programmes of the least developed countries. Two regional workshops in Africa and Asia, respectively, had addressed the need to involve women more directly in water supply and sanitation programmes, and another international meeting had dealt with the role of women

(Mr. Kong Fannong)

in sustainable development. Participants from such countries had been present at those meetings.

35. Many similarities existed between the United Nations Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s and the NADAF in which the Department was also involved. The United Nations was co-organizer of the international conference on African development to be held in October 1993 in Tokyo and was responsible for coordinating all United Nations system inputs including UNDP's.

36. Mr. HUSAIN (Observer for Bangladesh) said that the 47 least developed countries were facing daunting economic challenges. In pursuance of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries for the 1990s, they had initiated economic reforms with a view to improving efficiency in the mobilization and use of resources, scaling down unprofitable public enterprises and providing greater opportunities for the private sector and a market economy. That reform process could only be sustained, however, with international support; unfortunately, that support had not yet materialized.

37. Strengthening the management and institutional capacities of the least developed countries was critical for the development process. Over the years, their technical assistance requirements had become more diversified and urgent and their members had increased. In that context, his delegation had welcomed the Council's decision to allocate 55 per cent of programme resources to such countries during the fifth programming cycle. His delegation once again called on donors to reconsider their decision and to resume contributions to the Special Measures Fund for the Least Developed Countries (SMF/LDC) which had received no support from donors since 1990.

38. It was essential to strengthen the capacity of the least developed countries in aid coordination and economic management, especially in the context of the increased diversity and complexity of technical assistance programmes. UNDP had made a positive contribution in that area and also in that of human development. It was to be hoped that UNDP would also extend assistance in the environmental field as a part of the follow-up to Agenda 21. UNDP's efforts should also be directed towards increasing the number of trained local personnel who could replace expatriates in the management and implementation of programmes.

39. His delegation welcomed the relocation of the post of Coordinator of Assistance to the Least Developed Countries to the Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation, and hoped that that move would lead to better coordination and the mainstreaming of UNDP activities in all such countries.

40. Mr. BISTA (Observer for Nepal) said his delegation shared the view expressed in paragraph 2 of the report (DP/1993/18) that efforts to implement the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries should be looked at in the context of the overall situation of the least developed countries. The decline in the gross domestic product coupled with the huge external indebtedness of the LDCs was further depressing those countries.

(Mr. Bista, Observer, Nepal)

41. His delegation agreed that UNDP and all aid organizations must strengthen their efforts in favour of the least developed countries. However, merely increasing the proportion of UNDP core resources devoted to them would not suffice; it was equally important to increase the effectiveness of those resources. UNDP's activities with respect to different aspects of aid coordination and economic management were carried out in isolation from each other and had thus failed to achieve full effectiveness.

42. His delegation appealed to the donor community to increase its efforts to preserve the Special Measures Fund for the Least Developed Countries and to ensure that all programmes already approved for such countries were able to continue.

43. Mr. HORIGUCHI (Japan) said that his delegation fully supported UNDP in recognizing the areas of aid coordination and economic management and of human development as priority activities. In order to make maximum use of limited available resources, donors must coordinate their aid through the United Nations system and help recipient Governments establish policy coordination systems.

44. In shaping policies to promote the development of the least developed countries in the 1990s, the following points should be borne in mind. It would be useful to come to an international agreement on such areas as general targets, priorities and policies to assist the self-help efforts of the countries concerned, based on appropriate review of the experience of the 1980s as well as the wishes of the Governments. Such an international agreement would be helpful to Governments in formulating their development programmes and targets. If targets and policies became irrelevant in view of the actual situation no meaningful guidelines could be established. Development strategy for the 1990s should be realistic enough to serve as a guide for future activities. It was also important that each country make steady efforts to attain the targets by establishing priorities among various needs based on serious assessment of their situations.

45. His Government was determined to continue to make every effort to achieve the targets established in the Programme of Action in cooperation with the Governments, other donor countries and international organizations, including UNDP.

46. Mr. ROHNER (Observer for Switzerland) said that the Administrator's report had referred to a number of sources of finance for the least developed countries in addition to the national IPFs; mention should also be made of the regional IPFs, cost-sharing, United Nations Volunteers and what he hoped would be the growing volume of TCDC promoted by UNDP.

47. The report's references to strengthening the management capacities of the least developed countries were somewhat brief and descriptive; future reports on the subject should provide a more analytical overview of UNDP's performance in that area. The same was true with respect to the references to NATCAPs and round tables. Although progress had no doubt been made in both areas, some questions remained. In addition to further information on the issue of internalization, his delegation would be interested to learn how the conclusions of the study on rethinking technical cooperation in Africa might be applied to

(Mr. Rohner, Observer, Switzerland)

the ongoing NATCAP processes. With respect to the round tables, his delegation felt that more work was needed on the follow-up to round-table meetings at the local level. It would also like to know how many round tables were being planned for 1993 and how many least developed countries had requested UNDP support in formulating a human development strategy.

48. Mr. JANHA (Gambia) said that his country continued to benefit from UNDP assistance in aid coordination, which had enabled it to better integrate the entire aid process with its own efforts. The programme approach to development had also made it much easier to align donor priorities with those of the Government, while keeping in mind that alignment was a two-way process. In connection with national capacity-building, he asked whether the African Capacity-Building Foundation in Harare was now fully operational. He supported the approach to human development outlined in the Administrator's report, which was particularly useful for countries endeavouring to work out a poverty alleviation programme.

49. Mr. YAO Wenlong (China) said that UNDP should continue to help the least developed countries strengthen their national capacities in development and economic management, including their capacity to coordinate and manage international assistance. Its activities in recent years in sponsoring round tables and carrying out evaluation and programme preparation with respect to national technical cooperation also seemed to have been quite fruitful. His delegation appealed to the international community to increase its efforts to assist the least developed countries.

50. Mr. MOKOTJO (Lesotho) welcomed the recognition by UNDP that review of ongoing efforts to increase the effectiveness of its aid was of paramount importance. The recently completed review of the round-table procedures and guidelines for enhancing the effectiveness of round-table consultations had been a welcome development, and his delegation hoped that the close working relationship between UNDP and national authorities enjoyed during the review process would be continued during the implementation of the revised guidelines.

51. His delegation welcomed relocation of the post of Coordinator of Assistance to the Least Developed Countries to the Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation and was pleased to note that UNDP would continue to pay particular attention to aid coordination and economic management in the least developed countries, for his Government continued to attach great importance to those activities and maintained a close working relationship with representatives of UNDP and the other United Nations agencies and also with donor countries and the NGO community. Moreover, human and institutional capacity-building was one of the main areas of concentration of Lesotho's fifth country programme.

52. Lesotho was committed to the principle of equal opportunity for both men and women and placed a high priority on human resources development. The Government and people of Lesotho appreciated the generous assistance they had received from UNDP. If UNDP was to maintain current levels of assistance, it must receive substantially increased financial contributions; he therefore appealed to donors to do their best to meet that need.

53. Mr. BORJA DE MOZOTA (France) said that his country supported UNDP assistance to the least developed countries and intended to continue to support financially and participate actively in both the NATCAP and round-table exercises. It hoped that the funds which had been blocked by the Administrator would be unblocked in 1994, so as to help maintain the level of aid to those countries.

54. Mrs. VARSISHT (India) associated herself with the statements made by the preceding speakers. The situation in the least developed countries continued to be depressing, and it seemed to her that UNDP's assistance to those countries could be improved in many respects. Specifically, in the area of human development UNDP should make an effort to maintain a somewhat lower profile in carrying out its activities and to give more credit to Governments rather than to non-governmental organizations. In general, UNDP's efforts should be directed more towards increasing cooperation with the recipient Governments than enhancing the status of international organizations and donor countries.

55. Mr. LOUP (Coordinator of Assistance to the Least Developed Countries), responding to questions and comments from representatives, assured the representative of Bangladesh that UNDP shared his views on the need to provide assistance in the environmental area; it was also aware of the need to improve the integration of its various programmes and was determined to continue to make progress towards that goal in future years. In general, the administration agreed that there was a need to improve the development instruments and was making a continuous effort to do so. He thanked the Japanese and French representatives for their expressions of support for the NATCAP and round-table exercises; that support was especially valuable in view of the growing need for financing of those programmes. Replying to the representative of Switzerland, he said he believed that three round tables were planned for 1993 and about 20 countries had requested assistance in the area of human development. With respect to the conclusions to be drawn from the study on rethinking technical cooperation in Africa, he would point out that some of the study's conclusions had been drawn from UNDP's work; beyond that, the study as a whole would of course be given serious consideration and UNDP intended to implement some of its recommendations in the future. With respect to the Indian representative's comments, he said he would like to wait for the forthcoming discussion of the question of human development before commenting in more detail on the subject, but would assure her that UNDP had no intention of favouring the NGOs over Governments. Replying to the Gambian representative's question, he said that the African Capacity-Building Foundation was now fully operational and had begun to finance activities in various African countries.

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

(b) UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (DP/1993/42)

56. Mr. FRIPPIAT (Executive Secretary, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)), introducing the report of the Administrator (DP/1993/42), said that UNCDF was facing a difficult financial situation and, as it embarked on its most ambitious ever programme, its resources were barely higher in real terms than they had been in 1985. It had therefore been compelled to focus on specific geographical areas in order to make the best possible use of scarce resources through interaction between relatively small-scale projects. The areas had been chosen on the basis of a comparative needs assessment and according to their

(Mr. Frippiat)

ability to benefit in socio-economic terms from the Fund's investments, which were mainly in rural infrastructure and water supply projects. The Fund would continue to place emphasis on operations of that kind, together with credit programmes to enable small businessmen to exploit the economic opportunities available and the establishment of local development funds under the control of local authorities. Resource constraints had meant that such programmes could not be carried out in all eligible countries and close cooperation between UNCDF, UNDP and other donors had been vital in ensuring proper implementation of the programmes.

57. The Fund's efforts to encourage grass-roots participation were beginning to bear fruit. The aim was to involve local populations and institutions as far as possible in the formulation and management of their programmes. As a growing number of the countries in which the Fund was active took their first steps towards democratization, particularly in Africa, central authorities were increasingly supportive of the grass-roots approach. The resulting sense of local "ownership" and the improved management undoubtedly enhanced a project's prospects of achieving long-term sustainability, and the approach would continue to be pursued.

58. UNCDF had long been aware of the link between poverty and environmental degradation, particularly the damage caused in rural areas by population growth and inappropriate farming methods. The Fund would strive to reverse that trend by placing still greater emphasis on the environmental impact of its programmes and projects. Thanks to a gift from the Norwegian Government, UNCDF staff had been trained in environmental impact assessment. In addition, an eco-development study had been undertaken, drawing on the Fund's experience in environmentally fragile regions such as the Sahel. The findings had been incorporated in the Fund's programming procedures and could make a contribution to the international convention to combat desertification.

59. Turning to the question of resources, he noted that project expenditures in 1992 had reached a record level of almost $60 million. Accumulated resources, which had been a subject of donor concern, had fallen by approximately 11 per cent. General expenditure, including administrative costs, technical support, field implementation and agency costs, had been reduced from 20 per cent in 1991 to 17 per cent. It was hoped that those trends would continue.

60. On the negative side, however, contributions had fallen by 22 per cent, from a record level of $43 million in 1991 to $34 million in 1993. That decline, together with a high rate of project approvals, had compelled the Fund to reduce the scale of its operations by one third compared to 1991. If contributions continued to decline, implementation of the new projects, valued at $200 million, still awaiting funding could be delayed or jeopardized.

61. At a time when the increasing trend towards democratization and decentralization was creating opportunities for action, it would be regrettable if the Fund was unable to seize those opportunities for want of adequate resources. While recognizing that donor countries were in the grip of economic recession and faced other equally legitimate calls on their resources, he stressed that combating poverty was the key to dealing with other problems and

(Mr. Frippiat)

that UNCDF was the only multilateral body mandated to focus essentially on the poorest populations in the the poorest countries.

62. He appealed to Governments to increase their contributions and support so that the Fund could use its modest resources to nourish and strengthen local institutions and enable them to take over the programmes and projects it financed. According to the Human Development Report 1993, less than 10 per cent of total public expenditure in the developing countries was administered by local representatives, compared to 25 per cent in the developed countries. The international community had a duty to help develop the necessary structures to enable progress to be made in that vital sector. However, unless renewed and vigorous support was forthcoming, he was concerned that the Fund would slide into gradual decline and marginalization. He was sure that the Governing Council had no wish to see that occur and hoped that its decision on the Fund would provide enlightened guidance which would serve the vital interests of those who benefited from its assistance.

63. Ms. POLLACK (United States of America) said that her delegation was pleased to note that UNCDF had taken great care in the previous two years in selecting projects for loans, and endorsed the Administrator's proposal that the Council should authorize the continuation of the loan facility.

64. She noted that UNCDF had undertaken 26 evaluation missions during the 1991-1992 biennium and welcomed the fact that the results of previous missions had been incorporated into the design and formulation of new projects. However, the lack of pre-project baseline data was a continuing weakness affecting the Fund's ability to assess projects accurately. The report of the Administrator (DP/1993/42) had not paid sufficient attention to the problem and she would welcome any information the Executive Director could provide on the matter.

65. The Fund's approach in combining small-scale grant investments with long-term sustainable development activities was highly commendable and represented a sound and principled approach to development which should be encouraged on a wider scale. She urged UNCDF to continue to provide vision and leadership, but stressed that, if other donors were to replicate its pilot schemes, the availability of baseline data was again crucial in order to assess long-term viability and efforts should be made to ensure that such data was collected at the earliest possible stage.

66. She welcomed the proposal to concentrate on area-based approaches which, despite the inevitable constraints, would make it possible to develop programmes that would have the greatest impact on those most in need. Finally, she suggested that field visits, which had enhanced the Council's general ability to provide guidance to UNDP, should in future include a review of UNCDF projects wherever possible.

67. Mr. BROUWERS (Netherlands) said that his country had long been a supporter of UNCDF and intended to continue its strong support for the Fund in the years to come.

68. In 1991 his delegation had endorsed the Governing Council decision to integrate UNCDF into the Bureau for Programme, Policy and Evaluation with mixed feelings, on the understanding that its identity and autonomy would be

(Mr. Brouwers, Netherlands)

preserved. Having seen its decision-making and administrative authority reduced, the Fund had now also lost its financial unit. Any further erosion of its autonomy would be highly regrettable and everything should be done to ensure that it continued to function independently.

69. Market reforms, political reforms and democratization in many least developed countries were providing opportunities to involve the poorest sections of society in development activities and his delegation fully supported the Fund's efforts to renew and extend its policy and programmes in the field of infrastructure and public sector investments, credit facilities and community-based social and environmental activities.

70. The Fund's resources were derived largely from voluntary contributions by a small number of Western donors and economic recession and the rising number of countries designated as least developed had made its financial situation difficult. Imaginative fund-raising activities were therefore needed in order to attract new donors and put an end to financial instability.

71. Mr. URBAIN (Belgium) said that the difficulties experienced by the major financial institutions in effectively targeting the poorest sections of the population, together with the fact that their loans policies were ill-suited to the needs of small-scale operations, meant that thorough consideration should be given to the programme approach proposed by UNCDF, with its emphasis on local authorities, village communities and small businessmen.

72. Unfortunately, despite the broad international consensus on the importance of the Fund's role, the sharp decline in contributions meant that its resources were not commensurate with the scale of its planned activities. Nevertheless, the institution was increasingly focusing its efforts on promoting small-scale investments to low-income groups in the poorest countries and deserve special consideration from the donor community.

73. Close cooperation between UNCDF and UNDP could work to the benefit of the latter by complementing its investments aimed at improving public sector management capacity in the least developed countries, as well as making a positive contribution to the poverty reduction component of UNDP programmes.

74. Mr. KABIR (Observer for Bangladesh) said that widespread poverty in the least developed countries was a great impediment to development and the efforts of UNCDF to design innovative and viable projects aimed at increasing the productivity and income of the poor was highly commendable. However, the Fund's ability to meet its objectives depended largely on its resource base. Although it had been agreed, at the second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, that contributions should increase by 20 per cent annually, regrettably in 1993 they had declined by 13 per cent compared to 1991. At the same time, the number of countries eligible for UNCDF assistance had risen to 53.

75. His delegation had been dismayed to learn from the report that projects valued at over $150 million from 14 planning and project identification missions had been kept in the pipeline and that the Fund's total volume of operations had been reduced by one third compared to 1991. He welcomed the fact that 26 evaluation missions had been carried out, helping to identify weaknesses in

(Mr. Kabir, Observer, Bangladesh)

UNCDF activities. It was vital to learn lessons from those missions and put them into practice. In that connection, he felt that the proposal for area-based approaches deserved some consideration.

76. Ms. JACOBSEN (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that UNCDF played a unique and important role by providing small-scale investment to the lowest-income groups in the poorest countries. Its activities often had a catalytic effect and were complementary to UNDP technical assistance. The Nordic countries had always strongly supported the Fund and therefore regretted that the pledges for 1993 fell well short of the recommended 20 per cent annual increase.

77. Evaluations had shown that most UNCDF projects were achieving their objectives, but had also stressed the need for the Fund to utilize existing institutional capacity, with the emphasis on complementarity and cooperation. Cooperation with other organizations within the same region was also important for obtaining the reliable baseline data needed to make evaluations more effective.

78. When designing projects, it was very important to take into account future expenses on maintenance and upkeep, particularly in the case of non-income-generating projects and loan operations. The Nordic countries endorsed the Administrator's request that the Council should authorize continuation of the loan facility, and welcomed the Fund's efforts to curtail administrative costs. They had noted with interest the new strategy for the 1990s and looked forward to further discussion of the question, particularly the proposal for an area-based approach.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 4 June 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

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(a) United Nations Development Fund for Women

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

(b) UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (continued) (DP/1993/42)

1. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that an informal meeting could usefully be held in the days ahead to discuss the future and proposed priorities of the United Nations Capital Development Fund, which had acquired a great deal of valuable expertise and experience. While the report of the Fund (DP/1993/42) contained a wealth of useful information, it had not dealt in sufficient detail with the problems encountered in the areas of project execution and empowerment. It would be useful to have an exchange of experiences on the subject with a view to finding lasting solutions to problems. He hoped that the following report would contain more information on that subject.

2. On the question of resources, he believed that the Fund could make greater efforts to mobilize national resources for programmes. He was surprised to learn that the Fund had projects to a total of $200 million awaiting financing. Even in the most favourable scenario, such a volume of projects exceeded the financing capacity and the Fund should therefore allocate some projects to other financing agencies or seek co-financers. It was difficult to give advice when his country did not know how much it would be forced to cut in its budget for cooperation activities in 1994. Switzerland would nevertheless honour its multi-annual commitments to institutions, such as the World Bank and regional banks.

3. UNCDF depended on too small a group of donor countries and he wondered what was being done to increase the group; it was time for the Fund to review its current policy vis-à-vis the trust funds. Other organizations had taken initiatives, such as debt for nature swaps, debt for poverty alleviation and debt for rural development. The Fund could also find innovative ways of attracting financing instead of limiting its resources to general contributions. In addition, the Fund should collaborate with other financing institutions, such as the World Bank, which were all pursuing similar development objectives, by more fully exploiting the valuable experience it had acquired in development funding.

4. Mr. COGHLAN (Observer for Australia) said that Australia, which had itself maintained its level of funding to the United Nations Capital Development Fund, encouraged donors to maintain, or preferably to increase, their contributions. While the Fund was one of the smaller United Nations development agencies receiving core funding from Australia, he had confidence in its ability to focus on poverty alleviation, which was a priority area for the Australian aid programme. He noted that over 50 per cent of the new project approvals specifically targeted women as beneficiaries and he commended the Fund on its work in promoting women in development.

5. Australia would welcome discussion on policy development and on the two interrelated themes of the comparative advantages of the Fund as a sponsor of innovative approaches and the compelling reasons for operating within area-based development programmes.

(Mr. Coghlan, Observer, Australia)

6. His country had found that integrated rural development projects did not always achieve the success envisaged for them at the design stage. Its experience was probably shared by a number of recipients, donors and executing agencies. Nevertheless, rigorous evaluation of projects and programmes, together with the implementation of lessons learned, were essential for ensuring that mistakes were not perpetuated and that the best value was obtained for limited development assistance funds. The Fund should therefore continue to give priority attention to monitoring and evaluation activities.

7. Australia would welcome a visit of representatives of the Fund for discussions on Australia's aid programme and on the activities of the Fund in the Asia-Pacific region. Such discussions could also reveal scope for co-financing with the Fund from Australia's bilateral programmes.

8. Mr. BORJA DE MOZOTA (France) said that France had traditionally defended the structural identity and financial autonomy of UNCDF which had now become a source of concern as a result of the decrease in its resources. In that connection his delegation shared the concern expressed by the Netherlands delegation.

9. While there were difficulties in the execution of some of the projects, the overall effectiveness of the Fund's activities, their high visibility and low administrative costs were laudable achievements.

10. The Fund should aim in particular to provide assistance to new least developed countries or newly independent States and should increase efforts to help grass-roots communities boost their domestic savings. France would continue its direct cooperation with the Fund through organizations such as the French Development Fund, and it would increase its financial support in terms of voluntary contributions to the Fund and least developed countries.

11. Mr. MOKOTJO (Lesotho) said that the Fund continued to play an important and relevant role in the provision of grants and concessional credit to small-scale entrepreneurs, particularly in the least developed countries. Although the Fund's special role in the implementation of global poverty reduction strategies had been confirmed by major international conferences, the gap between available resources and the number of recipient countries was widening.

12. As a beneficiary of UNCDF assistance, Lesotho had continued to make regular modest contributions to the Fund within the limits of its own serious budget constraints. The devastating drought that had hit eastern and southern Africa necessitated increased assistance from the Fund. In that connection, donor countries were strongly urged to increase their contributions to the Fund. He welcomed the Fund's ongoing review of modalities for improving its delivery mechanism with a view to making assistance more timely and effective and shared the concern expressed in the report that the mechanisms for popular participation should be carefully elaborated.

13. The flexibility of the Fund's operations was one of its strongest comparative advantages. The Fund had also accumulated invaluable experience from working directly with grass-roots beneficiaries and local non-governmental organizations. His delegation hoped that the Fund's working relationships with those organizations would be further improved and strengthened, bearing in mind

(Mr. Mokotjo, Lesotho)

the important role that they were expected to play in making the implementation of Agenda 21 a real success.

14. Mr. GUO Xianzhi (China) said that, since the beginning of the 1990s, the least developed countries as a whole had witnessed further socio-economic deterioration and more countries had joined their ranks. Those countries were faced with the urgent task of alleviating poverty and stabilizing development. UNCDF had been specially established for least developed countries and had assumed an indispensable responsibility in helping them achieve their development goals.

15. In 1991, the Fund had spent $45.5 million in project expenditures, an increase of 11 per cent over 1990. In 1992, expected project expenditure would be between $50 million and $55 million, a historical high. He commended the Fund's efforts to promote productivity and to boost social services in least developed countries and its efforts to provide interest-free loans. Although the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries had set a goal of increasing the Fund's project expenditures by 20 per cent, in 1992 contributions to the Fund had fallen by 9 per cent as compared to the figure for 1991. In 1993, a further 5 per cent decrease was expected. His delegation deeply regretted that decline in resources. While least developed countries were primarily responsible for their own development, the support and assistance of the international community was indispensable. He hoped that the Fund would be flexible in finding new ways of fund-raising and that developed countries would make more generous contributions thereto. China, for its part, had consistently contributed to the Fund and maintained close cooperation with it.

16. Mr. FRIPPIART (Director, United Nations Capital Development Fund) said that the Fund's dilemma was how to remain creative and maintain visibility while its resources stagnated. Several representatives had drawn attention to the need for the Fund to gather background data on the local communities and their environment before embarking upon its funding operations. UNCDF proposed to update its information on such communities in the course of implementation of projects in order to assess the impact of its operations more effectively. In that connection, the Fund was open to suggestions and aware of the need to exchange information and cooperate with institutions involved in the same type of operation.

17. The Fund was facing a gap in financing. The Professional staff which previously devoted all its time to identification would henceforth refocus some of its attention on enhancing the follow-up and evaluation of operations. The Fund was aware that both recipients and donors wanted more accurate information on project impact and it would set about providing such information. In order to maintain its credibility the best way for the Fund to be creative about financing was to use its resources efficiently.

18. So far as policies were concerned, the Fund was on the right track. It would henceforth focus its attention on methodology. Accordingly, the division that dealt with policy definition would be involved to a greater extent in enhancing the definition of methodology. The Fund must adopt a coherent approach to the common group of problems of the 53 countries with which it dealt. It was absolutely necessary to put the Fund's concept into operation. In that regard, the definition of participation must be better understood.

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However, UNCDF was not an organization that defined the macroeconomic or macropolitical policies and strategies of the countries which it assisted nor was it equipped to do so. It should however remain abreast of what was happening so that whenever it intervened it would have adequate information on what it was doing in order to know the implications of the activities which it was about to carry out. That would enable the central authorities and other donors to benefit from such activities. It would therefore endeavour to combine a sound methodological approach in its operations with a sound knowledge of the political context in which it operated.

19. The Fund's financial reserves, to date, were not commensurate with the assistance needs of recipient countries. In 1993 alone, UNCDF had received requests for $210 million. Given the limited resources available, it had been necessary for the Fund to adopt a cautious approach to the granting of requests; as a result many worthy programmes had not received funding. In addition, the Fund was raising its available resources by participating in collaborative projects with other multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, grass-roots organizations and bilateral development-financing institutions. He was gratified that there was once again interest among international development-financing institutions in many of the countries served by UNCDF as a result of recent trends towards decentralization and democratization; that interest augured well for collaborative projects in the future.

20. While the Fund could be an effective partner in managing development projects at the local level, it should avoid involvements in national development projects which were normally the domain of the multilateral development organizations. The task of UNCDF was to concentrate on those sectors of society that were often overlooked by international development-financing institutions and national Governments alike, namely, small communities and individuals. The goal of the Fund was to perform the role of community treasury. In the absence of effective management by national Governments, many small communities lacked the local resources to execute their own development projects. Very often resources were simply passed along to the central Government. People living in small communities did not lack the desire to participate in development projects; the question was more one of managerial competence. Decentralization of management authority, therefore, involved certain trade-offs: losses in competence frequently cancelled out technical gains in efficiency. Therefore, the Fund continued to rely on technical assistance. A more effective approach would be to concentrate on a few key areas of activity that would enable the Fund to build upon past experience.

21. With respect to strategies for broadening the Fund's donor base, the Fund should explore new financing approaches, such as co-financing and parallel financing in cooperation with donor countries. In the current period of financial constraints, many donor countries were looking for similar financing alternatives for their own projects; therefore, there were opportunities available in that regard.

22. In response to the comments of some members on the need to take into account the maintenance costs of the Fund's economic infrastructure projects, he said that the inclusion of maintenance costs would be a priority concern of the technical advisers' group that had been established under the Technical Support

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Facility (TSF). It was essential for the Fund to maintain a high degree of rigor in its financial controls.

23. In response to a comment from one member regarding the erosion of the Fund's financial autonomy as a result of the transfer of its financial unit to a consolidated body serving a variety of UNDP funds, he said that UNCDF recognized that a compromise must be achieved among the overall interest of UNDP, the interest of the Organization in general, and the concerns of the Governing Council to rationalize its procedures in order to reduce costs. The step of combining the financial unit of UNCDF with the units of other UNDP funds was the consequence of such a compromise. He understood the concerns of the Administrator regarding costs; however, UNCDF had lost some of its autonomy as a result of the change. While the need for the reforms in question was not in doubt, there was nevertheless a point beyond which further reform could prove to be counterproductive. As the adage said "The 'best' must not be the enemy of the 'good'". He welcomed the comments by a number of States regarding the question of the financial autonomy of UNCDF.

24. The PRESIDENT said he would take it that the Committee wished to have a draft decision prepared reflecting views expressed in the general debate.

25. It was so decided.

(a) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (DP/1993/41)

26. Mrs. CAPELING-ALAKIJA (Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women) said that there was a large gap between public awareness of massive violations of women's rights and the accountability of public institutions to take measures to prevent such acts. The genuine accomplishments of UNIFEM, namely, empowerment of women, promotion of their human rights, and promotion of the role of women in development were being overshadowed by an almost continuous series of instances of gender-based violence and large-scale violations of women's rights.

27. For women in the crossfire of armed conflict or in slums, squatter settlements or refugee camps, survival was more tenuous than ever. Despite a deeper understanding of the actual and potential contribution of women to the development process and a shared commitment to sustainable development, women in the developing world to date did not command access to political institutions or to resources commensurate with their proven abilities. Moreover, continuing reluctance to recognize and to meet the needs of women was calling into question the viability of the development effort itself.

28. Sustainable development would depend on the efforts of both women and men. The optimism with which the decade of the 1990s had been ushered in had given way to the realization that the long hoped for benefits of the end of the cold war, namely the "peace dividend" and economic progress, could turn out to be illusory.

29. Resources and programmes for the poor continued to decline while terrorism, environmental degradation and socially and economically destructive migration were increasing. In that context, the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) assumed even more importance. The Fund had

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been implementing strategic initiatives in a number of areas that reflected its growing responsibilities, including refugee assistance programmes for southern Africa; regional projects in seed production, livestock breeding, environmental management; and food research for drought-stricken areas of that continent. Those programmes also inspired the creation of a specialized programme for women in Africa which provided a quick emergency response to the critical situation affecting the women of that continent.

30. Notwithstanding the important role of UNIFEM in responding to emergency situations affecting women, long-term solutions to the problems of women depended upon greater participation by women in policy-making. The involvement of UNIFEM in preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) demonstrated that the organization had a comparative advantage in being able to link women at the grass-roots level with policy-making processes. Moreover, the Fund's participation in UNCED had also inspired a proposal to assign an adviser on gender issues from UNIFEM to the Department of Humanitarian Assistance.

31. The Fund had also assisted the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in ensuring that women would be registered for the historic elections of May 1993. Participants in a meeting sponsored by UNIFEM had organized themselves into a Cambodian national women's organization that advocated equal rights for women, development and peace.

32. In Latin America, UNIFEM had been working with a local non-governmental organization (NGO) to establish a bridge-financing facility for women's micro-enterprises throughout the region. As a result of that programme, local banks had begun to extend credit through groups affiliated with that NGO to businesses which otherwise would not receive financing. Experience gained from that programme provided the Fund with a model for the use of financial instruments to support poverty alleviation through micro-enterprise development.

33. UNIFEM was proud of the support it had received from Member States over the past two years. That support had made it possible for the Fund to deliver approximately $15 million in aid in 1992. Improved management procedures would make it possible for UNIFEM to deliver slightly more than its income in the future. However, despite its successes, UNIFEM remained a small institution; increased demand for its services was placing a great strain on its limited resources. She hoped that an alternative mechanism of external financing, supplemented by new contributions from donors, would generate enough resources to enable the Fund to participate in the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing in 1995.

34. In conclusion, she said that the questions of greatest concern to women, such as fundamental political and civil rights, were not isolated from other issues of concern to the international community. The world needed to break the silence that had historically surrounded the issue of violence to women; only in that way could mass raping as in Bosnia and Herzegovina be averted in the future. One of the purposes of UNIFEM was to serve as a symbol of the solidarity of women throughout the world in opposing that kind of violence.

35. Mrs. VASISHT (India) said that the UNIFEM Director's appeal had struck a chord with her because, despite legal guarantees for the protection of women's rights, the attitudinal change necessary for real improvement in women's lives had been difficult to achieve. She considered UNIFEM's information dissemination and advocacy roles to be its most important responsibilities. UNIFEM was not struggling for absolute equality between the genders; rather, it was seeking to establish humane treatment of women as an international norm. She appealed to all countries to support UNIFEM by approving a level of funding for the current programming cycle that would be equivalent to past budgets.

36. Mr. FONDI (Italy) said that his country thought very highly of UNIFEM's work and had made substantial voluntary contributions to the Fund in the past. With respect to plans for decentralizing management of the Fund in accordance with resolution 47/199 on the operational activities of the Organization, Italy would support a phased-in approach. Lastly, he welcomed the comments of the Director regarding the Fund's participation in the International Conference on Human Rights (ICHR) and the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing in 1995.

37. Ms. VOLKOFF (Canada) said that her country supported UNIFEM's activities and was pleased that it had taken such an active role in preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. Canada also supported the Fund's efforts to work in collaboration with other specialized agencies, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Department of Humanitarian Assistance in the execution of joint projects. She agreed with the Swiss delegation that UNIFEM had been a good "team player".

38. Her delegation had expressed concern in the past regarding the information-disseminating role of UNIFEM, and for that reason she welcomed the Fund's recent efforts to raise its profile as an advocate for the role of women in development. She supported the selection of Julie Andrews to be Goodwill Ambassador for UNIFEM and shared the comments of the representative of India regarding UNIFEM's advocacy role. UNIFEM was fighting against marginalization of the majority of the world's people. She looked forward to working with UNIFEM in preparation for the World Conference for Women in 1995.

39. Mr. KOBAYASHI (Japan) said that his Government attached great importance to the advancement of women, which was a key factor in economic and social development. Japan's contributions to UNIFEM had increased at a greater rate than its contributions to other United Nations funds and programmes. He hoped that the Fund would continue to play an important role in that field and strengthen its activities relating to the 1995 Fourth World Conference for Women.

40. UNIFEM should identify its comparative advantage in promoting the advancement of women, strengthen its catalytic role and maximize project impact. It could also play an advocacy role by enhancing public awareness in that regard. UNIFEM should improve its coordination with other bodies involved, particularly United Nations agencies. A clear division of labour between UNICEF, UNDP and other agencies in the field was indispensable. Lastly, the Fund should provide precise and comprehensive information on projects, including project evaluation and follow-up.

41. Mr. TALADRID-SUAREZ (Cuba) said that his Government sought to bring about the full emancipation and participation of Cuban women in all aspects of social, scientific, economic and political life. Cuba wished to continue to avail itself of the benefits of UNIFEM and urged the Fund to pursue its work to promote the full equality of women. His delegation completely supported the preparatory work for the Fourth World Conference for Women. Lastly, he stressed that women's rights were also human rights and underscored the indivisibility and interdependence of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in that regard.

42. Mr. GUO Xianzhu (China) said that his delegation fully appreciated the achievements of UNIFEM and noted with interest that the Fund was actively participating in the preparatory work for the Fourth World Conference for Women to be held in Beijing in 1995. He hoped that UNIFEM would fully utilize its experience in participating in international conferences and make a substantial contribution to the 1995 Conference.

43. Mr. POST (Netherlands) said that development aimed at promoting the advancement of women must take into account the total everyday reality in which they lived. His Government, therefore, had incorporated the theme of women and development in its development cooperation programme and was a strong supporter of UNIFEM. He welcomed the fact that UNIFEM was addressing such issues as the environment and women refugees and noted with satisfaction the work carried out by the Fund in the preparations for UNCED.

44. There was a need for more clearly defined priorities in the Fund's activities. The report under consideration referred to certain priority areas, but did not clearly indicate why those priorities had been chosen. UNIFEM should place greater emphasis on mainstreaming gender issues in programmes financed or implemented by multilateral or bilateral donors; cross-sectoral issues, such as the preparations by UNIFEM for UNCED; and the further development of a clearly defined long-term policy. The Fund should also strengthen its role in the field of institutional gender capacity-building and providing support for national planning and decision-making procedures. Lastly, he pointed out that his Government and UNIFEM were jointly organizing an international seminar on violence against women in June, in which women from developing countries would be participating.

45. Mr. MONROE (United States of America) commended the outstanding performance by UNIFEM as a catalyst supporting the efforts of women in developing countries to achieve their economic and social development objectives. The Fund's global initiative on women, environment and development was particularly noteworthy and should serve as a model for initiatives in other areas of global concern to women. UNIFEM should make use of its position within the United Nations system and its strong ties to women's organizations to ensure that gender issues were addressed in international geopolitical debates.

46. Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) said that his Government generally preferred not to contribute to voluntary trust funds since earmarking funds for specific activities inhibited the flexibility of the United Nations system. Nevertheless, it considered the issue of women in development so important that it made an exception in the case of UNIFEM. His country's support had been continuous since the inception of the Fund and remained as firm as ever. The

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principal role of UNIFEM was still advocacy aimed at awareness raising and gender input at the planning level of operational activities throughout the United Nations system. The Fund could carry out similar activities at the national level. While UNIFEM could also play a role in catalytic and pilot-project activities, that should not supersede its advocacy work.

47. His delegation welcomed the proposed merger of UNIFEM with INSTRAW since having two separate United Nations bodies in the same field was unnecessary duplication and a waste of valuable resources. The Fund's financial situation, in view of the current unfavourable climate with regard to contributions, was satisfactory and the greatly reduced figure for unexpended resources was welcome. Lastly, he hoped that the Fund would make a substantial contribution to the Fourth World Conference for Women in 1995.

48. Mr. BORJA DE MOZOTA (France) expressed satisfaction at the work carried out by UNIFEM, which was all the more necessary in view of the major role played by women in development. Although France's voluntary contributions to the Fund were modest, they had steadily increased by 50 per cent over the past two years and would continue to do so. His delegation would appreciate further information on specific actions carried out by the Fund and wished to know if there was a list of ongoing UNIFEM projects. Additional information was also requested on the Fund's relationship with the other organizations concerned, such as UNICEF.

49. Ms. SIRVE (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the catalytic role of UNIFEM was the most important aspect of its mandate. That was clearly demonstrated by the Fund's success in highlighting women's issues within the context of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and its active role in the follow-up activities to Agenda 21. The report on the United Nations Development Fund for Women (DP/1993/41) should have provided more information on how UNIFEM had been successful in the areas of agriculture and trade and industry and on the new priority area of macro policy and planning.

50. Violence against women was a major obstacle to development and a serious violation of women's human rights. The Nordic countries welcomed the Fund's contribution to the dissemination of information on that and other subjects. The preparations for the Fourth World Conference for Women in 1995 were a major challenge for UNIFEM. It was hoped that information on the Fund's specific strategy in that regard would be provided. UNIFEM should also contribute the necessary gender-specific input to the world conferences to be held in the interim since the issue of women was highly relevant with regard to human rights, population and development and social development.

51. The initiative to relocate the Division for the Advancement of Women to New York under the auspices of the Department for Social and Sustainable Development would strengthen coordination in the United Nations system over the entire programme for the advancement of women. UNIFEM and INSTRAW played important roles in that programme. The Nordic countries were looking forward to further discussion of the possibility of merging those two bodies.

52. Mr. BLANK (Germany) said that the integration of women's concerns into the UNCED Agenda 21 was essentially the result of the efforts of UNIFEM and indicated an approach that might be of use for future world conferences based on a desire to improve the living conditions of women and men alike. He noted with satisfaction the Fund's training and employment of displaced persons and female refugees. That was of particular importance since approximately 75 per cent of the world's 15 million refugees were women and children. It was also gratifying to note that over the years there had been a regular increase in contributions and donations to UNIFEM. He hoped that the downward trend foreseeable for 1993 would be of a transitory nature and that the Fund would find new ways to tap additional sources.

53. There was some concern regarding the question of how UNIFEM would increase programme funds with minimal additions on the administrative side, while maintaining the high quality of its work. The delegation of certain financial and programme decisions to the regional programme advisers was certainly appropriate. It was not clear, however, how the Fund planned to expand its global activities within the United Nations family, its presence at the international level and its involvement in preparations for the forthcoming world conferences. Lastly, consideration should be given to the future development of the Fund and of possible new forms of organization.

54. Mr. ANDERSON (Jamaica) said that he fully concurred with the mission defined by UNIFEM, which was to support the efforts of women in both developed and developing countries to achieve their objectives of equality and economic and social development. With its adoption in 1987 of a national policy statement on women, the Government of Jamaica had taken a historic step towards affirming its commitment to the full participation of women in social and economic development. The necessary administrative mechanism to give practical effect to that commitment had since produced tangible results and the Government was continuing its efforts to incorporate concerns of gender into the early stages of project selection and design at both the macro-scale and grass-roots level.

55. While the work of UNIFEM at the country-wide level could be more visible, he expressed appreciation for the assistance given to the Women and Development Unit of the University of the West Indies in strengthening existing regional networks and stimulating work among women's group at all levels in the areas of alternative development strategies and the empowerment of women.

56. Mr. PONCE (Ecuador) said that his Government had long recognized the valuable contribution of women to economic, social and cultural development, particularly in the Andean region. The role of women had assumed even more critical importance as the current economic crisis challenged them to develop more imaginative ways of mobilizing the people and of meeting the needs of their communities. Seen in that light, the current and welcome food aid programme built merely upon certain traditional aspects of Andean culture.

57. His Government shared the views expressed in the report on the subject of violence against women and would welcome more detailed information on the projects being implemented in that area.

58. Ms. CAPELING-ALAKIJA (Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women), replying to the points raised by the delegations, said that she would address the issues of management, programming and public outreach or advocacy.

59. The emphasis of UNIFEM on effective management and rapid delivery of resources was a deliberate strategy to utilize a greater share of the resources allocated to it than previously. Certain problems had been encountered in the area of reporting, owing largely to the fact that each Government wished project data to be presented in a certain way. Since UNIFEM, an agency with a small staff, did not have the resources to reconfigure the data for suiting the particular requirements of each Government, she would shortly propose a formula for standardizing such reporting, which she hoped would be acceptable to Governments.

60. UNIFEM had adopted the programme approach, which permitted it to link its micro-activities and its macro-planning, since experience had shown that a proliferation of projects without a coherent organizing principle yielded poor results. In selecting its micro-activities, therefore, UNIFEM sought to ensure that they were innovative, catalytic, capable of replication and had an impact on policy-making in the recipient country. Micro-activities were also a vehicle for bringing women into the mainstream at all levels. In the effort to change policies that affected the status of women, it was also important to rely on macro-policy interventions to create the necessary enabling environment for women and thereby to increase the number and scope of micro-activities as well as the number of women involved in policy-making. UNIFEM had chosen to focus on agriculture, trade and industry because of the heavy involvement of women in those sectors, particularly in the developing countries, and the importance of those sectors to the national economy. UNIFEM was also cognizant of the importance of eliminating the constraints that forced women into those sectors.

61. The objective of UNIFEM, in terms of its advocacy efforts, was to create space for women and to place on the global agenda issues of concern to them. UNIFEM laid particular interest on sharpening the focus on gender issues. Its efforts in the area of women refugees in Africa, for example, were motivated by situations where more than 80 per cent of the refugees were women and their dependants. In that context, it viewed its own role as that of a catalyst for action on behalf of women, including such issues as violence against women, which was an obstacle to the full participation of women in development.

62. Its advocacy efforts sought to build on the momentum achieved at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and at the World Conference of the International Women's Year, in preparation for the 1995 World Conference on Women. She hoped that the international community would provide the resources to assist UNIFEM in discharging its key role of bringing to the fore at the World Conference those issues that were of concern to women. UNIFEM was working with the private sector and was already benefiting from the assistance of international women's organizations. It was making determined efforts to build a network of national committees and hoped that the target of 20 UNIFEM national committees would be achieved by 1995. She recognized the strains being faced by national development budgets but reminded donor countries that women in the developing countries were under even greater strain.

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63. UNIFEM would shortly make available a strategy document which it had prepared for the World Conference on Women. In that document, it stressed the need to enhance the visibility of women and to ensure that their voices were heard. It also proposed that networks of alliances should be developed between the countries of the North and South and called upon men to assume responsibility for ensuring gender equality.

64. The representative of Switzerland had observed that the effectiveness of UNIFEM was due to its small size and thus greater manageability. She wished to assure the Council, however, that, given the resources to expand, it could perform just as effectively but on a much larger scale.

65. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council agreed that the Drafting Group should begin the elaboration of a draft decision on the subject under consideration.

66. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.